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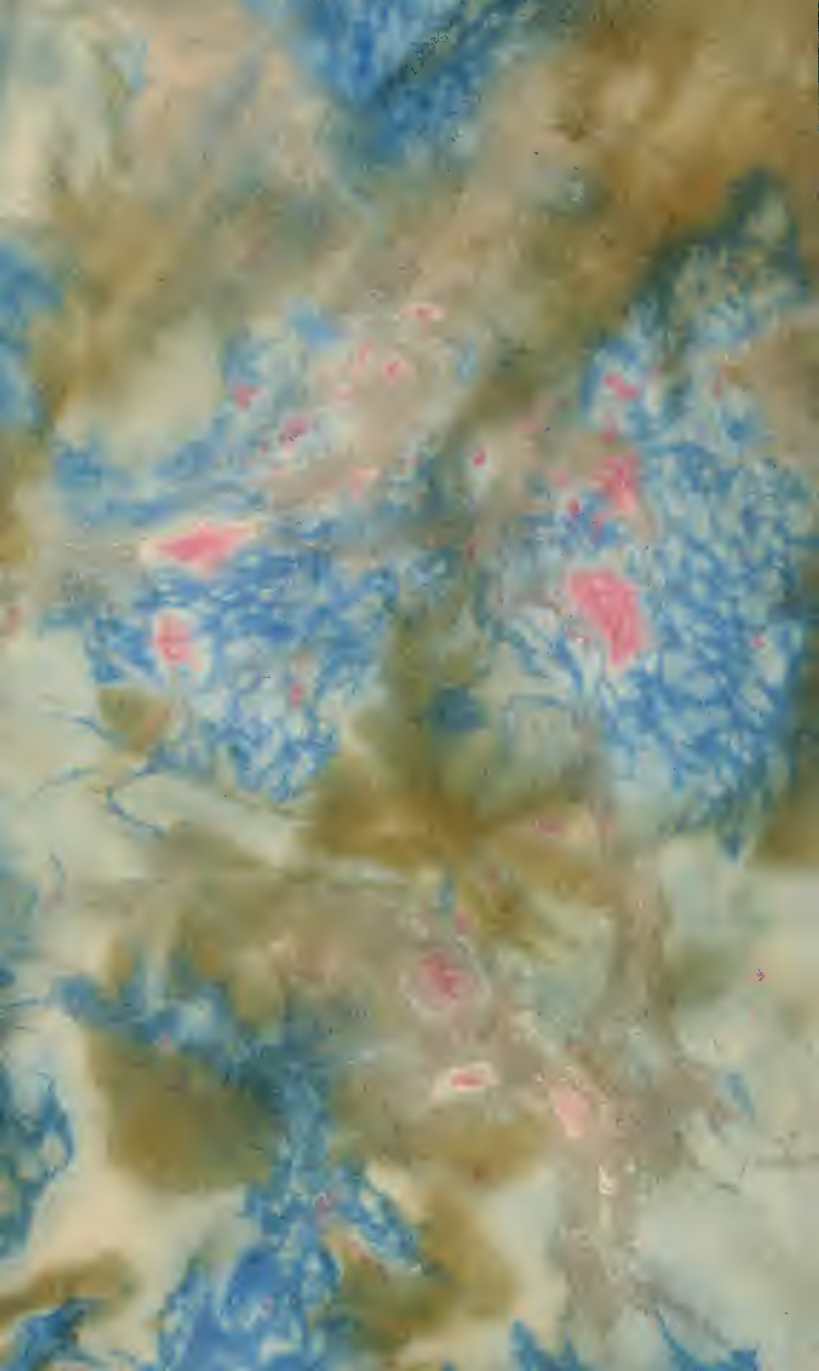

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MEMOIRS

OF

QUEEN HORTENSE.

VOL. 1

MEMOIRS

OF

QUEEN HORTENSE,

MOTHER OF NAPOLEON III.

COMPILED BY

LASCELLES WRAXALL

AND

ROBERT WEHRHAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MEMOIRS OF

QUEEN HORTENSE.

CHAPTER I.

DAYS OF CHILDHOOD.

It has been written by a great German poet that "death is not too high a price to pay for a moment of happiness," but a long life of torture and sorrow is too heavy a requital for a brief span of felicity. In the case of Hortense, the daughter of an Empress, and mother of an Emperor, it is hard to say when she knew that moment of happiness which was to reward her for life-enduring suffering. She wept much and endured much: from her earliest youth she learned to know tears and misfortune, nor were they afterwards spared to the maiden, the wife, and the mother.

Hortense is the member of the Napoleon family who most attracts sympathy. This delicate and yet haughty queen, when she descended from the throne, when she had ceased to be a queen, when she at length sought shelter in the tomb, weary of life and exhausted, still remained among us as the queen of flowers. Flowers have preserved the memory of Josephine's daughter, and they did not turn from her, as so many of her friends did, when she was no longer the daughter of the omnipotent Emperor, but of the exile. She still lived among the flowers, and Gavarny, the great poet of flowers, has erected a most touching monument to the queen in his *fleurs animées*. On a hill of Hortensias reposes the picture of Queen Hortense, and in the distance, like a departing mirage, the domes and towers of Paris may be seen. Solitude prevails around, but in the air soars the Imperial Eagle. The Imperial mantle with the golden bees spreads out behind it like a comet's tail, the dark red ribbon and cross of the Legion of Honour are round its neck, and in its beak it bears a richly-covered spray of Crown Imperial.

The Queen of Holland knew all the grandeur

and magnificence of the earth, and saw it all fade away into dust. But no, not all; her songs and poetry have survived, for genius needs no crown to be immortal. When Hortense ceased to be a queen by grace of Napoleon, she still remained the poetess, *Dei gratiâ*. Her poems are pleasing and graceful, full of tenderness, and of deep, passionate fire, which, however, never exceeds the limits of feminine delicacy; while her musical compositions are agreeable and melodious. Who does not know the song *Va t'en guerrier*, which Hortense wrote and composed, and afterwards transposed by Napoleon's desire to a military march? To the sound of this march the soldiers of France formerly left their country to bear the Gallic eagles to Russia; to the sound of the same march the soldiers of France so recently invaded Russia once again.

Hortense's song has survived. At first the whole world sang it loudly and joyfully, and when the Bourbons had returned, the wounded, crippled warriors at the Invalides hummed it softly, while conversing among themselves in whispers, about "la gloire de la belle France." Now the song echoes proudly again through France, it rises

jubilantly to the Vendôme statue, and the bronze countenance of the Emperor seems to smile. The song has now a sacred significance for France, for it is the anthem of a religion before which she would wish all nations to fall down and worship, "the religion of reminiscences." And the *Va t'en guerrier* that France now sings, echoes over the tomb of the queen, like salvos over the grave of a brave warrior.

The unhappy and amiable Queen fought a terrible contest, but she constantly had, and ever retained, the courage peculiar to women, of smiling through her tears. Her father died on the scaffold; her mother, the doubly dethroned Empress, of a broken heart; her step-father, on a solitary rock. Exiled and avoided, all these uncrowned kings and queens wandered hither and thither, banished from their home, and scarce obtaining from the mercy of those to whom they had once shown mercy a nook of land where they could live in retirement, far from the turmoil of the world, brooding over their great recollections and great sorrows. Their past lay far behind them, like a dazzling fairy tale, which no one longer believed, and the present

seemed welcome to nations, that they might irritate and torture the dethroned Napoleon family.

And yet, in spite of all this sorrow and humiliation, Queen Hortense had the courage not to hate humanity, and to teach her children to love their fellow-men and intreat them kindly. The heart of the dethroned queen bled from a thousand wounds; but she did not allow these wounds to cicatrize, or her heart to harden beneath the broad scars of sorrow. She loved her sufferings and her wounds, and kept them open with her tears; but the very fact of suffering so fearfully caused her to spare the sufferings of others and try to appease their grief. Hence her life was one incessant act of kindness, and when she died she was enabled to say of herself, as did her mother, the Empress Josephine, "I have wept greatly, but I never caused others to weep."

Hortense was the daughter of the Viscount de Beauharnois, who, contrary to the wish of his friends, married a young Creole lady, Mademoiselle Tascher de la Pagerie. The union, although

one of love, did not prove a happy one, for both were young and inexperienced, passionate and jealous, and both wanted the strength of character and energy necessary to turn the turbulent waves of their disposition into the channel of quiet matrimony.

The Viscount was too young to become to Josephine more than a loving and affectionate husband; he could not be her mentor and friend, to guide her in the difficult path of life; and Josephine was too inexperienced, too innocent, and too lively to avoid those acts which her enemies could use as a weapon against her, and misconstrue into calumnies.

Thus it came to pass that the domestic happiness of the young couple was soon troubled by violent storms. Josephine was too amiable and beautiful not to excite admiration and attention, and not yet sufficiently experienced to conceal her satisfaction at finding herself thus admired, nor was she prudent enough to avoid exciting such admiration. In the singleness and innocence of her heart she thought her husband could not possibly feel any disquietude or suspicion on account of her playful coquetry, and she expected that he would

repose implicit confidence in her fidelity. Her pride revolted against his suspicions, as did his jealousy against her seeming levity, and although at heart truly attached to each other, they would probably have dissolved their union, had not their children been a tie that kept them together.

These children were a boy, Eugène, and a daughter, Hortense, who was four years younger than her brother. Both parents loved these children passionately, and whenever a quarrel took place in their presence, an innocent word of Eugène or a caress from Hortense would effect a reconciliation between two persons whose anger was nothing more than irritated love.

But those matrimonial storms became more violent in the course of time, and unfortunately Hortense was left alone to effect a reconciliation between her unhappy parents. Eugène, at the age of seven, had been sent to school, and little Hortense, no longer assisted by her brother, began to be unequal to the task of allaying the storm that raged between her parents. Intimidated by the violence of these domestic quarrels, she fled to some remote corner of the

house, there to weep over a misfortune, the greatness of which her little childish heart was as yet unable to comprehend.

At this sad and tempestuous period of her life, Josephine received a letter from Martinique, in which Madame Tascher de la Pagerie described her loneliness in a house whose extensive premises none but slaves and servants shared with her, and she wrote with alarm of the sad change that had taken place in the demeanour of the latter. She therefore requested her daughter's return home, to brighten by her presence the last years of her mother's life.

Josephine regarded this letter as an intimation from Heaven. Wearied of domestic discord, and determined to escape from it for ever, she left France with her little daughter to seek on the other side of the ocean, and in the arms of her mother, the happiness of a peaceful life.

But at that time peace seemed to have fled from the world. All around storms were gathering, and an awful presentiment of impending danger, of horrors to come, seemed to hover over the human race. It resembled the sullen thunder that shakes the bowels of the earth when the

crater is about to open with volcanic eruptions, and bury beneath floods of burning lava the peace and tranquillity of the human race. And the crater *did* belch forth its flames, scattering death and destruction widely around, and sweeping entire nations from the face of the earth. It was the Revolution.

The first and most fearful explosion of that awful crater took place in France, but its effects were not restricted to that country. All the earth trembled and seemed threatened with destruction by the wild volcanic matter that was at work beneath its surface. Martinique also felt the mental earthquake, which in France had already produced that most hideous of the instruments of revolution, the guillotine. The guillotine had become the altar of so-called national liberty, on which the mad, fanatic fury of the people sacrificed to their new idols those who had hitherto been their masters and lords, and by whose death they thought to purchase their eternal freedom.

Egalité, fraternité, liberté, such was the battle cry of the intoxicated, bloodthirsty people. The words were written, as it were, in a spirit of cruel

jest, in letters of blood on the guillotine, and witnessed the descent of the blood-stained knife as it fell to sever the heads of the aristocrats, who, in spite of the principles expressed by the three words, were not allowed to enjoy the freedom of thought and life, or recognised as brothers.

The revolutionary fury of France had found its way to Martinique. It had roused the slaves of that colony out of their sullen obedience, and armed them against their masters. They were resolved to have their share of that liberty, equality, and fraternity which had just been proclaimed; but the incendiary torch that was hurled into the house of the white planters was an awful light to welcome their new-born freedom.

Madame de la Pagerie's house was burnt, like that of many others.

One night Josephine was awakened by the lurid light of flames, which had already penetrated into her bed-room. With a cry of despair she left her couch, and seizing Hortense, who was peacefully sleeping in her little bed, she hurried out of the burning house, and forced her way with a mother's desperate courage through the crowd of fighting soldiers and negroes that filled the

yard. Dressed only in a thin night-robe, she sped to the port, where the captain of a vessel, just entering his boat to return on board his ship, caught sight of the young woman with her infant clasped to her bosom, as she sank down exhausted by fear and exertion on the beach. Moved by compassion he hastened to assist her, and lifting both mother and child from the ground, he carried them to his boat, which immediately quitted the land and conveyed its fair burden on board the merchantman.

The vessel was soon reached, and Josephine, clasping her child to her bosom, and happy in the thought of having saved what was dearest to her, clambered up the dizzy ladder. All her thoughts were still directed towards the child, and it was not till Hortense had been placed in safety in the cabin, that Josephine noticed how slightly herself was dressed. When the mother had performed her duty, her feelings as a woman were aroused, and she looked fearfully and bashfully around her. Only half dressed in a light, fluttering night-dress, with no other covering for her neck and bosom than her long floating hair afforded, which enfolded her in a thick black veil, the youthful

Vicomtesse de Beauharnois felt that she was attracting upon herself the envious looks of the crew and passengers.

Some ladies who happened to be a-board kindly supplied her wants, and scarcely was her toilette finished ere Josephine demanded to be taken back to the shore, in order to inquire after the fate of her mother. The captain of the vessel refused to comply with her wishes, fearful lest the young lady should fall into the hands of the mutinous negroes, whose hideous yelling could be distinctly heard. The whole of the coast, as far as the eye was able to reach, seemed on fire, and resembled a second sea, a sea of flames, the raging waves of which appeared as it were to dash up columns of fire. It was a scene horrible to behold; and Josephine, no longer able to witness it, sought refuge in the cabin, where, kneeling down by the side of her slumbering child, she poured out her soul in prayer, begging God to have mercy on her poor mother.

After the ship had stood out to sea, Josephine again came on deck, and once more looked on the house under whose roof she had spent the days of her childhood, and which now was sinking fast

under the fury of the flames. As it grew smaller and smaller with increasing distance, and finally vanished, Josephine felt as if the star of her youth had gone down, as if she had just finished one life, a life of sweet dreaming and cruel disappointment, and was about to commence another with wholly different pursuits and feelings. The past, like Cortez' vessels, had been destroyed by fire, but the flames that devoured it seemed for a moment to cast a magic light on the future. As Josephine stood gazing on the disappearing shores of her native island, she remembered the words of an old negress, who a few days before had whispered a strange prophecy in her ear.

"You will return to France," she said, "and will soon see that country at your feet. You will become a queen—ay, even mightier than a queen!"

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHECY.

It was towards the end of 1790 when Josephine, with her daughter Hortense, arrived in Paris and took up her abode in a modest hotel. Here she soon afterwards heard that her mother had been saved, and tranquillity restored to Martinique. In France, however, the Revolution continued with increasing fury, and the guillotine and the banner of the reign of terror, the red flag, threw their ghastly shadow over Paris. Fear and dismay had taken possession of every heart; no one was able to say at night whether

the next morning he should be free, or whether he would live to see another sun set. Death was lurking at every door, and found an abundant harvest in every house, almost in every family. Amidst such horrors Josephine forgot the quarrels and humiliations of the past; the old love to her husband awoke again, and as perhaps to-morrow she might be no more, she wished to employ to-day in a reconciliation with her husband, and in once more embracing her son.

But all attempts to bring about such a reconciliation seemed to be futile. The viscount had considered her flight to Martinique so great an insult, so deliberate an act of cruelty, that he appeared unwilling ever again to receive his wife into his arms. Some sympathizing friends of the young people, however, at last brought about an interview, though without consulting Monsieur de Beauharnois. His anger was very great, therefore, when, on entering the drawing-room of Count Montmorin, he caught sight of his wife, Josephine, whom he had so obstinately and angrily avoided. He was about to leave the salon, when a little girl with outstretched arms ran towards him, calling out "papa." The viscount stood

as if spell-bound, and found it impossible to be angry any longer. He took up little Hortense and pressed her to his heart. She innocently asked him to kiss mamma as he had kissed her. He looked at his wife, whose eyes were filled with tears; and when his father approached him, and said, "My son, be reconciled to my daughter, for Josephine is my daughter, and I should not call her so were she unworthy,"—when he saw Eugène run to the arms of his mother—he could resist no longer. With Hortense in his arms he advanced towards his wife, who hid her face weeping on his breast, and burst into a cry of joy.

Thus peace was concluded, and the re-united couple loved each other more tenderly than ever they had done before. It seemed as if their matrimonial storms had passed, never to return, and as if from this instant they were to experience no more bitterness. But the Revolution was destined soon to blight their newly-born happiness.

The Viscount de Beauharnois had been chosen by the nobility of Blois to represent them in the States-general, but had resigned this dignity to serve his country with the sword instead of the

tongue. With tears and prayers Josephine saw him depart for the army of the North, in which he held the rank of adjutant-general. There was a voice in her breast that told her she would never see him again, and this voice did not deceive her. The spirit of anarchy and rebellion prevailed not only among the people, but also in the army which was under its sway. The aristocrats, who at Paris fell victims to the guillotine, were looked upon with suspicious, hateful glances by the soldiers; and thus it happened that the Viscount de Beauharnois, who, on account of his bravery in the battle of Soissons, had been promoted to the rank of commander-in-chief, was soon afterwards accused by his own officers of being an enemy to his country, and hostile to the new *régime*. He was arrested and sent as prisoner to Paris, where he was lodged in the dungeons of the Luxembourg, along with numerous other victims of the Revolution.

Josephine soon learned the melancholy fate of her husband, and the sad tidings roused her energy and love to action. She resolved either to free her husband, the father of her children, or to die with him. Regardless of danger, she

braved every peril, every fear of suspicion that might well have deterred her from the enterprise, and used every means in her power to obtain an interview with her husband, and offer him consolation and comfort.

But at that time even love and fidelity were looked upon as crimes deserving of death, and thus, being doubly guilty—first, because she was an aristocrat herself; and, secondly, because she loved a nobleman, a traitor to his country—Josephine was arrested and sent to the prison of St. Pelagie.

Eugène and Hortense might now be considered orphans, for at that time the prisoners of the Luxembourg and St. Pelagie never left their dungeons on any other journey but that to the scaffold. Isolated and deprived of all help, shunned by those who in former days had been their friends, the two children were exposed to hunger and misery. The fortune of their parents had been confiscated at the same hour that Josephine was dragged to prison, and the doors of their house had been put under the seal of the government, so that the poor children had not even a roof under which to find shelter. How-

ever, they were not altogether forsaken; for a friend of Josephine's, a Madame Holstein, had the courage to assist the children, and to take them into her own house.

But it was necessary to proceed with great caution, in order not to excite the suspicion and hatred of those who, from the very dregs of the nation, had risen to be the rulers of France, and who dyed the purple of their power in the blood of the aristocracy. An inconsiderate word, a look, might have been sufficient to make Madame Holstein an object of their suspicion, and consign her to the guillotine. It was considered a crime in itself to adopt the children of "traitors," and therefore it was absolutely necessary that everything should be done to lull the suspicions of the men who were in power. Hortense was obliged to join with her protectress in the solemn processions that took place upon each "decade" in honour of the Republic "one and indivisible;" but she was never called upon to take an active part in these festivities. She was considered unworthy to rank with the daughters of the people; they could not yet forgive her being the offspring of a viscount, of an imprisoned *ci-devant.*

Eugène was apprenticed to a carpenter, and the son of the nobleman might frequently be seen passing along the streets dressed in a *blouse*, and carrying a piece of board on his shoulder or a saw under his arm.

Whilst the children thus enjoyed a life of momentary security, the prospects of their parents grew darker and darker, for not only the life of the General de Beauharnois, but that of his wife, also, was seriously threatened. Josephine had been removed from her prison in St Pelagie, to the convent of the Carmelites, and thus advanced another step towards the scaffold. But she did not tremble for her own fate, she only thought of her children and her husband. To the former she wrote affectionate letters, which she managed to convey to them by means of a gaoler whom she had bribed, but all efforts to open a communication with the Marquis proved vain.

Suddenly she received intelligence that he had been carried before the tribunal of the Revolution. In awful suspense Josephine waited from hour to hour to receive further information. Had the tribunal acquitted her husband? Or had he been sentenced to death? Was he free? Or was he

liberated already in a higher sense—was he dead? If he were free he would have found means to inform her of his safety; if executed, why was not his name on the list of the condemned? Josephine passed a day of agony, and when night came she was unable to sleep. She, therefore, sat up in company with her companions in misfortune, who all, like her, expected soon to die.

The persons assembled in this prison were of high rank and birth. There were the Dowager-Duchesse de Choiseul, the Vicomtesse de Maille, whose son, though only seventeen years of age, had just died on the guillotine,—the Marchioness de Créqui, that witty woman who has often been called the last Marquise of the old *régime*, and who has left us in her Memoirs, although they are written with the prejudices of an aristocrat, the history of France during the eighteenth century. There was also that Abbé Texirer, who, when called upon by the messengers of terrorism to take an oath of fidelity to the new government, and threatened upon refusal with hanging from a lantern-post, asked his assailants, "Will you see better, think you, if you hang me up at that lantern?" Besides these persons, there was in

the prison a M. Duvivier, a pupil of Cagliostro, who, like his master, was able to divine the future, and could read the mysterious enigmas of destiny by the aid of a decanter filled with water, and a "dove," that is to say, an innocent girl under seven years of age To him, as the Grand Cophta, Josephine applied after this day of agonizing uncertainty, and demanded to know her husband's fate.

It was a strange scene that took place in the stillness of night, within the walls of the dark and lonely prison. The turnkey, bribed with a fifty-franc assignat, whose current value, however, did not exceed forty sous, had consented to his little daughter's playing the part of the "dove," and made all necessary preparations. In the middle of the room stood a table, on which was a decanter filled with water, while three candles, forming a triangle, were placed round it. These candles were stationed as close as possible to the decanter, in order to enable the "dove" to see more plainly. The little girl, just taken from her bed, and attired in her night-dress only, sat on a chair close to the table, and behind her stood the tall imposing figure of the seer. The Duchesses

and Marchionesses, who a short time ago had been the ladies of a brilliant court, and who preserved even now the etiquette and manners of Versailles, had duly arranged themselves around. Those who in the Tuileries had enjoyed the proud privilege of the *tabouret*, had the precedence, and were treated with all possible respect. On the other side of the table stood the unfortunate Josephine, pale, her eyes fixed in awful suspense on the features of the little girl, and in the background the gaoler and his wife were visible.

The seer now laid both his hands on the child's head, and said in a loud voice: "Open thy eyes and look!"

The child grew pale and shuddered as she looked at the decanter.

"What dost thou see?" the Cophta asked. "I command thee to look into the prison of General de Beauharnois; what seest thou?"

"I see," the child replied, in an excited manner, "a young man sleeping on a camp-bed. At his side there is another man, who is writing something on a sheet of paper that is lying on a great book."

"Canst thou read?"

"No, citizen! Oh, look! the gentleman cuts a lock from his hair and puts it in the paper."

"The one that sleeps?"

"No, no, the one who was writing just now. He begins writing again, he writes something on the paper in which he put his hair; and now he takes out a small red pocket-book, he opens it, he counts something. There, he shuts it again and walks noiselessly, oh, so noiselessly—"

"How so noiselessly, child? Didst thou hear the slightest noise before?"

"No, but he walks on his toes."

"What dost thou see now?"

"He covers his face with both hands; I think he weeps."

"Where does he leave his pocket-book?"

"Oh, *parbleu*, he puts it in the pocket of the sleeping man's coat, and the letter too."

"Of what colour is the coat?"

"I cannot see exactly, but I think it is red or brown, and it has shining buttons."

"That will do, child," said the seer; "return to bed."

He stooped to the girl and breathed on her

forehead. She seemed as if awakening from a dream, and hastened to her parents, who led her away.

"General de Beauharnois is still alive," the Grand Cophta said, turning to Josephine.

"Yes, he lives," she said, sadly, "but he is making preparations for death."

She was right. A few days afterwards the Duchesse d'Anville received a letter, accompanied by a parcel, sent her by a prisoner in *la Force*, whose name was de Ségrais. He had been imprisoned in the same room with the Marquis de Beauharnois, and had found, on the morning of the General's execution, the letter and parcel addressed to the Duchess in the pocket of his coat.

Beauharnois in this letter begged the Duchesse d'Anville to deliver to his wife the packet, which contained a lock of his hair and the farewell lines addressed to her and the children.

This was the sole inheritance the unfortunate General left to his family. When Josephine received the tokens of affection, she was so much overpowered by grief that she fainted, and a stream of blood poured from her lips.

Her companions in misfortune hastened to assist her as far as was in their power, and besought the gaoler to go and call in a physician.

"What is the good of a physician?" the man asked, indifferently. "Death is the best doctor. This very day it cured the General, and in a day or two it will have cured his wife as well."

This prophecy nearly proved true. Josephine had hardly recovered a little, ere she received the act of accusation from the Tribunal of Terror. This was a sure sign of approaching death, and Josephine began to prepare to meet it courageously, though thinking sorrowfully on her orphan children.

An unexpected event saved her life. The leaders of the terrorist government had reached the height of their power, and since there was no standing still in a career like theirs, they were precipitated from that height and hurled into the abyss which they had themselves dug.

The downfall of Robespierre opened the prison-doors of thousands who had already been doomed to fall victims to the monster Revolution. The Vicomtesse de Beauharnois amongst the rest

was liberated, and allowed to join her beloved children; but she left the prison a widow, and penniless, for her fortune, as well as that of her husband and all other aristocrats, had been confiscated by the Republic "one and indivisible."

CHAPTER III.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLUTION.

FRANCE once more breathed freely. The reign of terror had passed by, and a milder and juster government held the reins of the poor quivering country. It was no longer a crime deserving of death to bear a noble name, to be better clothed than the *sansculottes*, to abstain from wearing a red cap, or to be related to an *emigré*. The guillotine, which for two years past had brought sorrow and tears to Paris, was allowed to rest after its horrible activity, and the Parisians once more found leisure to think of something else besides making their wills and preparing for death.

As the Parisians were allowed to call the present moment, at any rate, their own, they wished to enjoy it before it had passed away; before new days of anxiety should come to startle them out of their newly-acquired security. They had wept so much that they wanted to have a laugh; had lived so long in fear and mourning that they longed for some amusement. The fair ladies of Paris, whom the guillotine and reign of terror had deprived of their authority, and driven from their throne, found courage sufficient to take up again the sceptre that had dropped from their hands, and to re-occupy the seat whence the tornado of the Revolution had swept them. Madame Tallien, the all-powerful wife of one of the five directors who now stood at the head of the French nation, Madame de Récamier, the friend of all the distinguished men of her age, and Madame de Stäel, the daughter of Necker, and wife of the ambassador of Sweden, which country alone had acknowledged the republic of France,—these three ladies gave back to Paris her salons and réunions, her splendour and her fashions.

Paris looked quite different from what it had

been a short time previously. Although the Church had not yet publicly been re-instated in her former authority, yet some persons began again to believe in the existence of a God. Robespierre had possessed the courage to place over the altars of the churches which had been transformed into temples dedicated to Reason, the inscription, "There is a Supreme Being" (*un être suprême*), and he was soon in his own person to experience that he had not been mistaken. Betrayed by his own companions, accused of wishing to raise himself to the rank of a Dictator, to be a new Cæsar to the new republic, Robespierre stood as a prisoner before that very tribunal of terror himself had called into existence. He was busy signing sentences of death at the town-hall, when a number of Jacobins and national guards forced the door of the Hôtel de Ville and arrested him. He tried to blow out his brains with a pistol, but the attempt was unsuccessful, and only ended in the shattering of one of his jaw-bones.

Bleeding profusely, he was dragged before Fouquier Tainville to hear his doom, and then to be delivered into the hands of the executioner.

In observance of the customary forms, however, he was first taken to the Tuileries, where the committee for public safety were sitting in the bed-room of Marie Antoinette. To this room Robespierre was dragged, and insultingly thrown on a great table that stood in the centre. The day before he had been sitting at this table, with power over the life and property of every Frenchman; but yesterday he had been signing sentences of death there. They lay still scattered about, and these papers were now the only bandage the suffering man had to staunch the blood which profusely flowed from his wound. It was strange to see how they greedily drank up the blood of the man who had signed them. A *sansculotte*, who stood by, was moved with compassion, and gave Robespierre a rag from an old tricolour-flag, that he might cover the wound in his face. As the ex-dictator lay groaning amidst the blood-stained sentences, an old national guard raised his arm, and, pointing to the fearful spectacle, exclaimed, "Robespierre was right—there is a Supreme Being!"

The time of terror and blood had now passed. Robespierre was dead, Théroigne de Méricourt

was no longer the goddess of reason, and Mademoiselle Maillard had ceased to typify liberty and virtue. The ladies were tired of playing the part of goddesses, and representing symbolical figures; they wished to be themselves again, and erect once more in the drawing-room, through their wit and grace, that throne which the Revolution had shattered into fragments.

Madame Tallien, and Mesdames de Récamier and de Stäel were the restorers of society at Paris, and every one was anxious to obtain admission into their salons. These parties and réunions were certainly of a strange and fanciful nature. It seemed as if fashion, who had so long yielded to the Carmagnole and the red cap, was determined to have her revenge for a long exile by indulging all her caprices and extravagances, and she sometimes assumed quite a political and reactionary mien. The ladies no longer dressed their hair *à la Jacobine*, but *à la victime* and *au repentir*. To show a good classical taste they adopted the statuesque dress of ancient Greece and Rome. Greek festivals were held, in which the black broth of Lycurgus conspicuously figured, while at the Roman banquets a luxury and profusion

were displayed, that made them worthy rivals of the feasts of Lucullus.

These Roman banquets took place generally in the Luxembourg, where the five directors of the republic had taken up their quarters, and where Madame Tallien made regenerated French society acquainted with the new marvels of luxury and fashion. Too proud herself to wear the generally adopted dress of the Greek republic, Madame Tallien selected that of a patrician Roman lady. The flowing purple robes, embroidered with gold, and the glittering diadem that crowned her raven tresses, imparted to the beautiful republican the imposing appearance of an Imperatrix. She also assembled a brilliant court around her, for every one was eager to pay homage to the powerful wife of the powerful Tallien, and thus gain her favour. Her house became the gathering place of all who held an important post in Paris, or who were desirous to get into office. Whilst in the salon of Madame de Récamier, who in spite of the republic had continued to be a royalist, people whispered of the happy time of the Bourbons, and made sarcastic remarks on the republic,—whilst at Ma-

dame de Stäel's house an asylum for the arts and sciences had been opened,—in the drawing-room of Madame de Tallien the present hour, and the splendour with which an exalted station surrounded the dictators, were alone enjoyed.

Josephine de Beauharnois and her children meanwhile lived in seclusion. The day came, however, when she was obliged to give up even the consolation of the wretched reflections on their misfortunes, for poverty tapped at her door, and her children must be protected from hunger and misery. The viscountess was forced to seek as a petitioner those who had the power of granting as a favour what was simply her right, and who might grant a partial restoration of her fortune. Josephine had known Madame Tallien when this lady was yet Madame de Fontenay. She now remembered this acquaintance for the sake of her children, for through her they might perhaps recover the inheritance of their father. Madame de Tallien, *la marveilleuse de Luxembourg*, whom her admirers also used to call *Notre dame de Thermidor*, felt highly flattered that a real viscountess, who had occupied a distinguished place at the court of King Louis, came to seek

her patronage; she received her with great kindness and endeavoured to make her her friend.

However it was no easy task to recover a confiscated fortune. The republic was ever ready to take, whilst it was not at all its custom to restore, and even the friendship of the powerful Madame Tallien was unable to relieve Josephine with the speed her distress required. The viscountess suffered greatly; she had to go with her children through the hard school of want and humiliation, which is the companion of poverty. But even in the midst of her misery she had some friends who spread a table for her and her children and provided for their necessities. At that time it was hardly considered humiliating to accept benefits from friends, for those who had lost everything had lost it through no fault of their own, and those who had been fortunate enough to save their property in the general shipwreck, knew that they had to thank chance, and not their own merit and foresight for it. They therefore considered it a sacred duty to share with those who had been less fortunate than themselves, and the latter might take, without a blush, the offering of friendship. The Re-

volution had given birth to a species of communism.

Josephine hence thankfully accepted without a blush the kindnesses of her friends; she allowed Madame de Montmorin to clothe her and Hortense, and she accepted the invitations which twice every week gave her a seat at the table of Madame Dumoulin. In the hospitable house of this lady there met, on certain days, a number of persons whom the Revolution had deprived of their fortunes. Madame Dumoulin, the wife of a wealthy army contractor, prepared on such occasions a dinner for her friends, but each guest was expected to bring his own bread with him, this article of food being considered a great luxury at the time. Grain was so scarce at Paris that the Republic passed a law, according to which, in each *section* of the town a certain number of loaves only was to be baked daily, and each individual was allowed only two ounces. Under these circumstances it had become a customary thing to add to an invitation, "You are requested to bring your own bread," for sometimes it was altogether impossible to procure a larger quantity of this article of food

than was allowed by Government, and it was besides extremely dear. Josephine Beauharnois, however, could not afford to buy her two ounces. She was the only one who came to the dinners of Madame Dumoulin without any bread, but her kind hostess always managed to find a loaf for her and little Hortense.

However, the time had now arrived when the Viscountess de Beauharnois was to reach the end of her distress. One day, when dining at the house of Madame Tallien, the Dictator told her that through his mediation "Government was willing to make some concessions in favour of the widow of a true patriot, who had fallen a victim to the prejudices of the time," and that he had received an order from the administration of the domains, according to which the seals were to be removed at once from all her movable property. The republic also gave her an *assignat*, payable by the treasury, and promised that the sequestration should shortly be removed from her estates.

Josephine could not find words to express her thanks; she clasped her daughter to her heart and exclaimed amid her tears, "We shall be once

more happy, for my children will no longer suffer want!" These were the first tears of joy Josephine had shed for many a year.

Want and misery were now over. Josephine was enabled to give her children an education befitting their rank, whilst she herself was once more allowed to occupy that station in society which by birth, education, and amiability, she was entitled to fill. She no longer came as a medicant to the house of Madame Tallien, but was now the queen of that drawing-room, and every one hastened to pay homage to the young and beautiful viscountess, who was known to be the intimate friend of Madame Tallien. But Josephine preferred the company of her children to the brilliant circles of the best society; she withdrew more and more from this noisy life to devote herself to her beloved children, whose characters became day by day more marked and interesting.

Eugène was now a youth of sixteen, and since his safety no longer demanded that he should conceal his name and deny his rank, he quitted the workshop of his master, and divested himself of the blouse. Under the guidance of excellent

masters he was preparing for the army, and astonished his teachers by his zeal and unusual talent. The war-like glory and the brave deeds of the French swelled his bosom with enthusiasm, and once, when one of his masters spoke of the feats of Turenne, Eugène exclaimed with glistening eyes, "I too shall one day be a great general."

Hortense was by this time twelve years of age, and lived with her mother, who was but a woman of thirty, on the footing of a younger sister rather than that of a daughter. They were always together. Nature had endowed Hortense with beauty, and her mother combined sweetness and grace with that beauty. Able teachers instructed her mind, whilst Josephine educated the heart. Early accustomed to care and distress, to want and misery, the child did not possess that carelessness and levity of disposition commonly found in girls of her age. She had seen too much of the instability and vanity of earthly grandeur not to despise those trifles that are generally so much valued by young girls. It was not the object of her ambition to dress handsomely, and to bend her neck under the yoke of fashion. She knew

greater pleasures than those found in the gratification of vanity, and never was she happier than when her mother excused her from going to the parties of Madame Tallien or Barras. Then she would amuse herself with her books and her harp, and certainly these afforded her greater enjoyment than was to be found in the drawing-rooms of "good society."

Hortense had acquired in the school of misfortune a premature ripeness of mind, which imparted to the girl of twelve the staidness and independence of feeling of a woman ; but her lovely features still bore the expression of childhood, and in her deep blue eye there was a heaven of peace and innocence.

When in the hour of twilight she sat in the window niche, with her harp by her side,—when the last beams of the setting sun gilded her features and shed a halo round her head,—she might have been fancied one of those angels of innocence and love whom the pencil of the artist and the poet's song have brought before us. Josephine used to listen with something like devotion to the sweet melodies her daughter drew from her harp, and to which, with a silvery voice, she

sang lines written by herself, passionate, but full of childlike innocence. These verses were the faithful mirror of her innermost feelings, the true image of the young innocent girl who had arrived at the boundary

> "Where the brook and river meet,
> Womanhood and childhood sweet."

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL BONAPARTE.

Whilst Josephine, after many a year of misery and privation, thus enjoyed sunny days, France was still agitated by occasional blasts of that storm which had thrown her into confusion, and the country did not as yet enjoy a permanent peace. The clubs, those hot-houses of revolution, still exercised a pernicious influence over the inhabitants of Paris, and continually instigated the masses to discontent and rebellion.

But now at last the man emerged from the crowd who was to crush these masses under his

iron heel, and to silence the orators of the clubs with a flash of his commanding eye. This man was Napoleon Bonaparte.

He was scarcely twenty-nine years of age, but already all France was speaking of him as a laurel-crowned hero, who had left a track of brilliant victories behind him. As commandant of a battalion he had distinguished himself by his daring bravery at the re-capture of Toulon, and after his promotion to the rank of general he was sent to Italy. When he returned as a victor to France, the Government, hostile to the general of twenty-five, and perhaps afraid of his genius, wished to send him as a brigadier-general of infantry to the Vendée. Bonaparte declined this mission, because he wished to serve in the artillery, whereupon the Republic deprived the young general of his command and placed him on half-pay.

Thus Bonaparte remained in Paris, waiting until his star should rise. And his star did rise; it rose with such brilliant splendour that it dazzled the eyes of the world! Had he already a prevision of his future greatness?

Bonaparte's days at Paris passed in mono-

tonous succession. They were spent in meditation and in the society of a few faithful friends, who assisted him with kind delicacy in his poverty. For Bonaparte was poor. He had lost during the Revolution the little he had; he possessed nothing but the laurels he had won on the battle-fields of Italy and his half-pay as a brigadier-general. But, like Josephine, he had faithful friends, who considered it an honour to see him at their table, and who even provided him with bread; for he, too, like Josephine, was too poor to buy it. He and his brother Louis took their dinner frequently at the house of an early friend, Bourienne, who afterwards became Napoleon's secretary. The young general used to bring a ration of ammunition bread with him, as did his brother Louis, but Madame Bourienne always took care that he found some white bread by his plate. They had smuggled some flour into Paris from Bourienne's country seat, and bribed a pastry-cook to bake bread for them, which proceeding, if detected, would undoubtedly have led to the guillotine.

Bonaparte thus lived quietly in the midst of his friends. He waited for a change in his fortunes,

hoping that his wishes would be realized as soon as the present Government should be superseded by another. His wishes appear at that time to have been very modest, for he once said to Bourienne, "If I could live comfortably in Paris, rent the little house opposite, with my friends for a *vis-à-vis*, and keep a cabriolet, I should be the happiest of men."

He seriously thought of renting "the little house opposite," together with his uncle Fesch (the future cardinal), when important events once more agitated the capital of France, and recalled his attention to public affairs. The thirteenth Vendémiaire, 1795, drew the young general from his obscurity, and gave him back all his energy and ambition. It was on this fifth day of October that the storm burst, which for a long time had been gathering over Paris. The sections rose in rebellion against the National Convention, who had presented France with a new constitution, and decreed that two-thirds of their members should enter the new legislative body. The sections of Paris, however, were unwilling to accept the constitution, unless an entirely new election should regulate the formation of the law-

giving assembly. The Convention resolved to defend what they considered their right, and called upon the representatives, who commanded the armed forces, to protect the Republic. Barras was chosen commander-in-chief of the army of the interior, and Bonaparte received the second command. It soon came to a sanguinary conflict between the soldiery and the mutinous sections, but as at that time the tactics of barricade fighting were still in their infancy, the insurgents were soon obliged to fall back before the destructive fire of a well-directed artillery. They retreated into the church of St. Roch and on the Palais Royal, fortifying their positions, but were again dislodged, and the contest in the streets recommenced.

At the end of two days, during which blood flowed in streams, Barras informed the victorious Convention that peace had been restored, and that the courage and caution of General Bonaparte had considerably contributed to bring about this happy result.

The National Convention rewarded Napoleon's zeal by confirming him in the post which he had held provisionally in the hour of danger.

From this day Napoleon belongs to history; his star had commenced to rise on the horizon of fame.

Napoleon had now a position in the state, and began to understand the voice in his heart that spoke to him of proud victories and a great future. He now felt that there was a high prize before him for which he had to struggle; and, although he was as yet unable to give a name to this prize, he was resolved to win it.

One day a youth came to the house of the young general, who urgently demanded to speak with him. Bonaparte allowed him to enter. He was struck with the bold and noble bearing of the young man, and kindly inquired what he wished.

"General," the youth replied, "my name is Eugène Beauharnois. I am the son of a *ci-devant*, the General Beauharnois who served the Republic on the Rhine. My father was calumniated by his enemies and handed over to the tribunal of the Republic, which murdered him three days before the fall of Robespierre."

"Murdered?" said Napoleon, with a threatening voice.

"Yes, General, murdered!" Eugène replied boldly. "I now come to ask you, in the name of my mother, to exercise your influence with the committee for the restoration of my father's sword. I will use it to fight the enemies of my country, and to defend the cause of the Republic."

This haughty language called a smile of approbation to the pale cheek of the young general, and his eye had an expression of benevolence when he said—

"Well spoken, young man! I like your courage and your filial piety. You shall have the sword of your father. Wait a moment."

Napoleon called one of his aides-de-camp, to whom he gave the necessary orders, and the officer soon returned with the sword of the defunct General de Beauharnois.

Bonaparte himself handed it to Eugène. The young man in deep emotion pressed it to his heart, whilst tears silently welled from his eyes.

The General approached him, and, laying his soft white hand on the youth's shoulder, said, in a sympathizing voice—

"My young friend, I should be happy if I could do anything for you or your mother."

Eugène wiped away his tears, and looked up with an impression of childish astonishment.

"You are very kind, General; mamma and my sister will pray for you."

The artless reply called a smile to the General's face. He nodded kindly, and told Eugène to give his compliments to his mamma, and visit him again soon.

This meeting of Eugène with General Bonaparte was the beginning of the acquaintance of Napoleon and Josephine. The sword of the beheaded Marquis de Beauharnois placed an imperial diadem on the brow of his widow, and exalted his children to royalty.

CHAPTER V.

THE MARRIAGE.

A FEW days after this occurrence, Josephine met the young general at one of the brilliant soirées given by Barras the Commander-in-chief. She asked Barras to introduce her to his colleague, and then, offering her hand in the frank but modest manner peculiar to her, she thanked Bonaparte for the kindness he had shown her son.

Bonaparte looked with astonishment upon this beautiful young woman, who called herself the mother of a grown-up son. Her features

still possessed all the charms of youth, her dark fiery eye bespoke a passionate disposition, whilst the sweet, animated smile that played round her lips indicated a kind heart and womanly modesty.

Napoleon never understood the art of flattering women in the easy and pleasing manner of a *petit maître;* whenever he tried to do so he failed most decidedly. His compliments were sometimes of the most awkward and ludicrous nature, and might as well have been taken for insults. When emperor, he once said to the beautiful Duchesse de Chevreuse,* "How fine that red hair of yours looks!" "Very probably," the lady replied, "but I assure you it is the first time I was ever told such a thing." On another occasion he remarked to a belle whose fair arm had attracted his attention, "Mon Dieu, que votre bras est roux!" and to another, "You have really very beautiful hair, but your way of arranging it displays a horribly bad taste."

Bonaparte, we repeat, did not know how to flatter with words, but he understood the lan-

* The Duchess of Chevreuse soon afterwards was banished to Tours, because she refused to serve the Queen of Spain as a lady of honour.

guage of the eye, and Josephine had no difficulty in translating that mute language. She knew that from this hour she led the young lion captive, and she was happy in the consciousness of it, for her own heart, which she had long believed dead, beat for the youthful hero.

They began to meet frequently, and soon Josephine heard the confession of Napoleon's love. She returned his passion and promised him her hand. In vain did her powerful friends, Barras and Tallien, advise her not to marry the young, poor general, who might be killed in one of the next battles, and leave her a widow a second time. She was resolved to follow her own inclination, and shook her little head with a meaning smile. Did she remember the prophecy of the old negress? Did she read on Bonaparte's lofty forehead and in his fiery eye that he was the man who could realize it? Or did she love him so passionately as to prefer a humble lot by his side to a more advantageous marriage?

However this may have been, the counsels of her friends proved ineffectual to shake her resolution; she had made up her mind to become the wife of the poor officer. The day of their

marriage was fixed, and both began to make preparations for the establishment of their household. Bonaparte had not yet been able to realize his *rêve de bonheur;* he possessed neither horse nor cabriolet, and Josephine too was without a carriage Thus they were obliged to walk through the streets, but very probably they preferred it to driving, since it allowed them an opportunity for uninterrupted conversation, undisturbed by the rattling of the carriages. He often enjoyed the satisfaction of hearing Josephine's beauty admired as they walked along Then a smile would glide over his face, and when the people gathered to have a look at the hero of the 15th of Vendémiaire, and whispered his name as he passed, his affianced bride would justly be proud of the man she had chosen in spite of the opposition of her friends, and to whom she looked for the realization of the propheey.

One day Bonaparte accompanied the Viscountess to Mons. Ragideau, the smallest man, but the greatest lawyer, of Paris, who for a long time had been the adviser of the Beauharnois family, and who was now to procure her the money for the furniture of her house. Bonaparte

remained in the ante-chamber, whilst Josephine entered the office.

"I have called to tell you that I intend to marry again," Josephine said to M. Ragideau, with her delicious smile.

The little solicitor nodded approvingly.

"You do well," he replied, "and I congratulate you sincerely, for your choice cannot fail to be a good one."

"Certainly it is a good one," Josephine answered, with the happy pride of a loving woman; "my future husband is General Napoleon Bonaparte."

The little lawyer started up with terror.

"What! you, the Viscountess de Beauharnois, mean to marry that little General Bonaparte, that general of the Republic, which has already dismissed him once, and that may dismiss him again to-morrow?"

Josephine simply answered, "I love him."

"Yes, you may love him now," the man of law replied, in his well-meant zeal, "still you ought not to marry him, for you will one day regret it. I say again, that you are making a mistake, Viscountess, committing an act of folly,

in marrying this man, who has nothing he calls his own but his sword and his cloak."

"But who has in addition a great future," Josephine replied joyfully; and changing the conversation, she spoke about the matters that had brought her to the office.

When the business with the solicitor was terminated, Josephine returned to the ante-room, where the General had been waiting for her. He approached her with a smile, but he gave M. Ragideau, who followed her, such a glance of anger and contempt, that the little man started back in dismay. Josephine also noticed that Bonaparte's face was even paler than usual, and that he spoke less than was otherwise his custom; but she had learned by this time that it was advisable, in such cases, not to ask him any questions about the reason of his ill temper; she therefore took no notice of it, and thus soon succeeded in dispersing the cloud on his brow.

The marriage of Bonaparte and Josephine took place on the 9th of March, 1796, the witnesses being, in addition to Eugéne and Hortense Beauharnois, Barras, Jean Lemarois, Tallien, Calmelet, and Leclerq.

The civil certificate contained a mistake that must have been flattering to Josephine. Bonaparte, in order to produce an equality between his own age and that of his bride, had represented Josephine as four years younger than she was, while he added more than a twelvemonth to his own age. Bonaparte was not born on the 5th of February, 1768, as stated in the marriage certificate, but on the 15th of August, 1769; and Josephine's birthday was not the 23rd of July, 1767, but the 23rd of June, 1763.

Josephine rewarded Bonaparte in a princely manner for his delicate flattery. On his wedding day he received the command-in-chief of the army of Italy, for which promotion he was indebted to the interest his wife possessed with Barras and Tallien.

Before the young husband went to the scene of war, where he was to gain new laurels and new fame, he spent a few happy weeks in the arms of his wife. He lived with his family in a small house in the Rue Chantereine, which he had bought some time previously, and which had been tastefully furnished by Josephine.

Thus one half of Bonaparte's *rêve de bonheur*

had become reality; he possessed a house of his own. The cabriolet was the only thing wanting to make him "the happiest of men."

Unfortunately, a man's desires always increase with their satisfaction; and Bonaparte soon ceased to be content with having a house in Paris; he wished to have a country-seat besides. "Please to look out," he wrote to Bourienne, who was then living in his estate near Sens, "please to look out for some property in your beautiful valley of the Yonne that might suit me. I should like to retire, only mind I will not have any national property."

As for the cabriolet, the peace of Campo Formio gave the victorious general a magnificent team of six white horses, which were a present from the Emperor of Austria to the General of the Republic. Did the emperor imagine for a moment that this general ten years afterwards would be his son-in-law?

These six splendid horses, however, were the only thing Bonaparte brought back from Italy, if we except the laurels he gained at Arcole, Marengo, and Mantua, and were the only present the general did not refuse to accept.

The six white horses could not be harnessed to a cabriolet, it is true; but they looked very stately when drawing the glittering carriage in which the first consul, a year afterwards, made his solemn entry into the Tuileries.

CHAPTER VI.

BONAPARTE IN ITALY.

JOSEPHINE, as we have said, spent some happy weeks in Paris, but they were few in number. After Bonaparte had set out for Italy she felt very lonely; the more so because she was not only obliged to take leave of her husband, but of her children too. Eugène accompanied his step-father to Italy, and Hortense was sent to school at the establishment of Madame Campan.

This lady, who had once been woman of the bed-chamber to Queen Maria Antoinette, had established a *pension* at St. Germain, and all the

leading families of revolutionary France liked to send their daughters to Madame Campan's that they might acquire the manners and graceful ease of old royalist France.

Hortense remained for several years at the school at St. Germain, where she had the company of her aunt Caroline, Bonaparte's sister (the same who afterwards became Queen of Naples), and of her cousin, the young Countess Stephanie de Beauharnois.

These years were spent in study, and the pleasant dreams of maidenhood. Hortense worked hard; she learned several languages, music, and drawing, as well as history and geography, and no inconsiderable part of her time was given to the task of acquiring the manners of fashionable society, and that aristocratic *savoir vivre*, of which no one was a more perfect mistress than Madame Campan. The young girl's education was intrusted to the best masters; Isabey taught her drawing, Lambert singing, Coulon was her dancing-master, and the celebrated Alvimara gave her lessons on the harp. There was an amateur theatre at Madame Campan's establish-

ment, on whose boards Hortense performed heroic and sentimental parts, and balls and concerts were frequently given by the *directrice*, to parade before the *élite* of society the accomplishments of her pupils. Thus Hortense was educated as a lady. Very probably she did not then think how important these apparently trivial matters would prove some day, or the benefit she would derive from having been at Madame Campan's establishment, and learning there to appear in society as a *grande dame*.

Josephine in the meanwhile progressed from triumph to triumph. Her husband's star rose higher and higher; the name of Bonaparte was re-echoed throughout the world, and made Europe tremble with the presentiment of future misfortune. Bulletin on bulletin of victories in Italy arrived, while beneath Bonaparte's brazen heel states crumbled away, and new states were formed on their ruins.

The old Venetian republic, which had once been the terror of the entire world, the victorious Queen of the Mediterranean, was now forced to bend its haughty neck, and it lay broken at the

feet of the conqueror. The lion of St. Mark no longer made the world tremble with its roar, and the lofty pillars that stand on the Piazetta, in memory of victories of yore, were the only trophies decaying Venice could save of her conquest of Candia, the Morea, and Cyprus. But from the dust and ashes of the Venetian Republic rose by Bonaparte's command a new state, which was called the Cisalpine Republic, and was the first-born daughter of republican France. While the last doge of Venice, Luigi Manin, had to lay his pointed crown at the feet of Napoleon, and fainted in the effort, another Venetian, of the name of Dandolo, was placed at the head of the new Republic. Dandolo sprang from a noble family, which had given to Venice her greatest and most illustrious doges, and was himself "a man," by Bonaparte's own testimony. "Mon Dieu," said Napoleon one day to Bourienne, "how rare it is to meet with men in this world! There are eighteen millions of souls living in Italy, but I have only found two men amongst them, Dandolo and Melzi."

But whilst despairing of men in the midst of his victories, Bonaparte preserved his ardent and

longing love for a woman, to whom, almost daily, he wrote the tenderest letters, and whose answers he awaited with the greatest impatience.

Josephine's letters alone did not suffer from the strange and singular custom which Bonaparte adopted during one period of his Italian campaign, and which consisted in throwing all letters that arrived, with the exception of those brought by extraordinary couriers, into a large basket, where they remained unopened until twenty-one days had elapsed. Bonaparte was not quite so harsh as the Cardinal Dubois, who burnt every letter on the moment of its arrival, and used to say, while looking with a sardonic smile at the flames that were devouring the petition of a despairing mother, perhaps, or of a disconsolate wife, "*Voilà ma correspondence faite!*" Bonaparte, we say, was not quite so harsh. He at least read his letters, although they had to wait for three weeks. These three weeks saved him and his secretary Bourienne a considerable amount of labour, for when the letters were opened it turned out that circumstances had rendered the answering of four-fifths of them unnecessary, and that few only remained to be replied to. Bonaparte heartily

laughed at so unexpected a result, and was very much pleased with his "happy idea."

Josephine's letters, however, had not to wait for an hour, nor for a minute, to be read. Bonaparte always received them with a beating heart, and always answered them in such passionate expressions as could only be dictated by his hot Corsican blood, and in comparison with which Josephine's letters seemed cold and unimpassioned.

Marmont tells us in his Memoirs, that at Verona Bonaparte happened to break the glass of Josephine's miniature: he turndd pale and said, "Mamont, my wife is either very ill or unfaithful."

Bonaparte soon wished to see more of Josephine than her letters. Scarcely had the fury of war somewhat abated ere he summoned her to Milan. She gladly obeyed the call, and hastened to Italy to join her husband, with whom she spent days of triumph and gratified love. All Italy shouted "Welcome!" to the victorious hero, all Italy paid homage to the woman who bore his name, and whose loveliness and affability, whose beauty and grace, had won all

hearts. Her life at that time resembled a glorious triumphal procession, an intoxicating festival, a legend from the Arabian Nights' Tales, that had ceased to be fiction, and whose glistening fairy was Josephine.

CHAPTER VII.

CHANCES AND CHANGES OF FORTUNE.

Bonaparte, on his return from Italy, made a brilliant and triumphal entry into Paris. In front of the Luxembourg, where the *corps legislatif* used to hold their sittings, a large amphitheatre had been erected, in the midst of which stood an altar of patriotism, surrounded by three large statues, representing Liberty, Equality, and Peace, and by all the notabilities of France.

When Bonaparte entered this square, all the men who crowded the seats of the amphitheatre rose and uncovered their heads to salute the

conqueror of Italy, whilst the open windows of the palace were filled with handsomely-dressed ladies, who welcomed the young hero with waving handkerchiefs. This solemn scene was suddenly interrupted by a fatal accident. An officer of the Directory, who, impelled by curiosity, had climbed to the top of the scaffolding of the right wing of the Luxembourg, then under repair, fell from his eminence and died at Bonaparte's feet. A cry of horror rent the air; the ladies turned pale and withdrew from the windows, and through the ranks of the *corps legislatif* there spread a sudden consternation. Here and there a subdued whisper might be heard that the fall of the official boded no good to the Directory whose servant he was, and that it soon would lie like him at the feet of the victorious general.

In spite of this presentiment of danger, however, the Directory eagerly honoured the victor of Arcole with daily festivities. When Bonaparte at the end of such banquets returned home, exhausted with speeches and toasts, there was still the people of Paris to be satisfied, who surrounded him on his way, and whose shouts and congratula-

tions he was obliged to return by nods and becks and wreathed smiles.

The French nation seemed intoxicated with joy. Everybody saw in Bonaparte his own glory, everybody considered him the most brilliant incarnation of his own self, and therefore loved him with a sort of enraptured delight.

Josephine enjoyed these glorious days with her whole soul, while Bonaparte, as if shy and embarrassed, evaded these ovations of the Parisians. While, in the theatre, he endeavoured to screen himself behind his wife's chair, Josephine felt her heart dilate with pride and satisfaction, and would thank the public for the proofs of their love, and the homage they paid to her "Achilles."

But Bonaparte did not let himself be blinded by these ovations. One day, when the enthusiasm of the public rose to an unusual height and the cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" seemed to be almost interminable, Josephine turned to him and said,

"See how these good Parisians love you!"

"Pshaw!" Napoleon answered, "they would press around me quite as eagerly were I on my way to the guillotine."

At last the festivities and demonstrations ceased, and life once more began to flow in a calm and natural current. Bonaparte lived in his own house in the Rue Chantereine, which had been splendidly furnished by Josephine. This street soon afterwards received the name of Rue de la Victoire, in honour of the hero of Arcole and Marengo. Here the hero now rested from his triumphs in the arms of his wife, with whom he spent days of the purest happiness.

This state of inactivity, however, soon weighed heavily on his mind. He longed for new deeds, new victories. He felt that he had only just begun his career to greatness; waking and in his dreams he heard the war-trumpet sounding in his ear, which seemed to call him to the battle-field. Love might refresh his heart, but it was ever unable to fill it. Inactivity appeared to him like the commencement of death.

"If I remain here much longer without doing anything," he said, "I am lost. The Parisians have a short memory for everything. In this Babylon extraordinary things follow each other in so rapid a succession that I soon shall be forgotten if I cannot show something new."

So he undertook something new, something unheard of, that excited the astonishment of all Europe. He left France with an army to conquer for the Republic old Egypt, on whose pyramids the dust of forgotten ages lay accumulated.

Josephine did not accompany her husband, but remained in Paris. Still she required consolation and encouragement in her solitude, of which Bonaparte had said that it might last six months, or might last six years. Could there be a sweeter consolation than the presence of her daughter? She had handed over the son to her husband, who took him with him to Egypt, but the daughter was left to her, and she was now recalled from school.

Hortense's education was by this time finished. The child who, two years ago, had entered the establishment of Madame Campan, left it as a lovely, blooming young woman, possessing all the charms of innocence and youth, of grace and refinement. Hortense was sixteen years of age, but she still had the childish gaiety, the unsuspecting innocence of girlhood. Her heart resembled the unsullied page on which no

profane hand had dared as yet to inscribe an earthly name. She only loved her mother, her brother, the arts and flowers. She felt a sort of awe for her young step-father. His fiery eye terrified her, his imperious voiee made her heart tremble; she looked up to him with too mueh veneration to be able to love him. To her he was always the hero, the lord, the father to whom she owed implieit obedienee, but never the objeet of tender affeetion.

Hortense looked into the future with that ehildish euriosity whieh makes the eye behold the world through the rose-eoloured light of faney. She expeeted some great and brilliant event that should make her perfeetly happy, without, however, knowing, or endeavouring to know, what it would be. She still loved all men, and believed in their faithfulness and sineerity. No sting had as yet wounded her heart, no blighted hope, no illusion destroyed, had thrown a shade of diseontentedness upon her smooth forehead. Her blue eye beamed with joy and happiness, and her mirth was so hearty and innoeent, that it sometimes made her mother feel quite melancholy. She well knew that the happy period

when life stands before us like the golden dream of morn could not long endure.

Such was Hortense when her mother fetched her from the *pension* at St. Germain to go with her to the watering-place of Plombières. At this place Hortense nearly lost her mother.

One day she was with Josephine and some other ladies in the drawing-room. The window opening on the balcony was thrown back, and admitted the warm air of a summer breeze. Hortense was sitting near the window, occupied in drawing a bouquet of field-flowers, which she had gathered on the neighbouring mountains. Josephine found the air in the room sultry, and proposed to the ladies who were with her that they should adjourn to the balcony. Suddenly there was a loud crash and confused cries. Hortense started up and beheld her mother precipitated into the street, with the balcony and all the ladies that were with her. Hortense, in the first intensity of grief, would have thrown herself after her mother, had she not been withheld by force. But Providence had been merciful; her mother suffered no injury beyond the fright and a slight

bruise on her arm. One of the ladies broke both legs.

Josephine was not yet to die. The prophecy of the fortune-teller had not been fulfilled. Though she was the wife of a celebrated general, it is true, she was not yet more than a queen!

CHAPTER VIII.

BONAPARTE'S RETURN FROM EGYPT.

BONAPARTE had returned from Egypt. The victory of Aboukir had added a new leaf to the laurel wreaths that encircled his brow. The whole French nation hailed the returning hero. Hortense, for the first time, took an active share in the festivities that were given by the city of Paris to her step-father, for the first time she saw the reverential homage that was paid to the conqueror of Egypt by both sexes, by old and young.

These festivities and ovations half alarmed

her, whilst at the same time they filled her heart with delight. The young girl recollected the prison wherein her mother had pined, remembered the scaffold on which the head of her father had fallen, and often, when looking at the richly embroidered, glittering uniform of her brother, did she think of the time when as a carpenter's apprentice Eugène used to walk through the streets of Paris, clothed in a blouse and with a plank on his shoulder.

The remembrance of the sorrowful years of her childhood prevented pride and haughtiness springing up within Hortense's heart. She retained that spirit of modesty and moderation which kept her from being presumptuous in happiness, and gave her courage and hope in misfortune. She never persuaded herself to a belief in the continuance of greatness, her early recollections always kept her eyes open to sober reality; and, therefore, when the storms of life arrived she was prepared to meet and resist them.

But for all that she enjoyed the days of sunshine; she was happy to see her dearly beloved mother crowned with the diadem of

glory and love, and in the name of her murdered father she felt the liveliest gratitude towards General Bonaparte, who brightened the existence of a woman who during her first marriage had suffered so much.

But, alas! new clouds were soon to darken their happiness, and to interrupt the pursuits of peace and its enjoyments. Another revolution became imminent; France once more was to become the theatre of civil war, and Paris soon assumed the aspect of a great camp, divided into two hostile factions, who burned to annihilate one another. On one side stood the democratic Republicans, who regretted that the days of blood and terrorism were past, because peace would wrest the reins of dominion from their grasp, and who therefore were resolved to consolidate their power by the aid of terror. This party called upon the *sansculottes* and Red Republicans of the clubs to defend their country. They declared liberty and the constitution to be in danger, and pointed with menacing hand at Napoleon as the man who wished to overthrow the Republic, in order to again fetter France with the chains of tyranny.

On the other side were the cautious patriots, the Republicans *par force*, who inwardly detested the Republic, and had only taken the oath of fidelity in order to preserve their necks from acquaintance with the guillotine. They were the men of genius, artists and poets, who looked forward to a new era, because they knew that a time of terrorism and a tyrannizing democracy are quite as fatal to the cultivation of the muses as to human life. On this side too were the merchants, landowners, bankers, and tradespeople, who all wished to see the Republic established on a quieter and more moderate basis, in order that they might be able to believe in its stability, and recommence the pursuits of peace with a better conviction of success. At the head of this moderate party stood Bonaparte.

The 18th Brumaire, 1798, was the day for the decision. On that day a fierce struggle took place, though it was not a very sanguinary one. Principles chiefly were killed, and not men.

The Council of the Aged, the Council of the Five Hundred, the Directory, and the Constitution of the Year III, all were overthrown, and out of the ruins of the blood-stained Red demo-

cratic Republic arose the moderate commonwealth of 1798. At its head stood three consuls: Bonaparte, Cambacères, and Lebrun.

On the day after the 18th of Brumaire these three consuls, amidst the acclamations of the people, made their entrance into the Palais Luxembourg, and slept as victors in the beds which, but yesterday, had been occupied by the members of the Directory.

From this day a new era began to be formed. Etiquette, which, during the time of the democratic Republic of France, had hidden itself in the remotest corner of the Luxembourg, or of the Tuileries, began to show itself again in open daylight. It was no longer necessary to deny, in homage to the principle of equality, all difference of rank or education, by the use of the word "citizen:" people were no longer compelled to endure, in the name of fraternity, the insolent familiarity of the hero of the street; and it was no longer expected that people should sacrifice personal liberty and ease on the altar of freedom.

Etiquette, we repeat, left its hiding-place. It received the three consuls with the word "Monsieur;" and Josephine, who came the next day to

occupy, with her daughter, the rooms that had been prepared for them in the Luxembourg, was addressed as "Madame." A twelvemonth before, the words Monsieur and Madame had been the cause of risings and bloodshed. General Augereau had addressed an order of the day to his division, interdicting the use, either with lip or pen, of the words Monsieur or Madame, and had threatened transgressors with expulsion from the army, as unworthy to serve under the banners of the Republic.

These proscribed words now re-entered, with the three consuls, the Luxembourg, which had been freed from the democratic tyrants.

Josephine was now, at any rate, Madame Bonaparte; Hortense, Mademoiselle Beauharnois; and Madame Bonaparte was also permitted to keep a greater number of servants, and to live in a more brilliant manner generally, than had hitherto been her wont. True, there was no such thing, as yet, as a court, or ladies of honour, and the Luxembourg was not a very spacious residence; but the day was near at hand when Monsieur and Madame were to change their humble title into "Your Majesty," and when

the Tuileries were to receive the inmates of the Luxembourg.

The latter palace soon proved too small for the three consuls; too small for Bonaparte's ambition, who disliked living in close proximity with the men who shared the supreme power, and too small for the gratification of wishes which now rose distinctly in Bonaparte's heart, and urged him onward in his career to greatness. He now knew to what he aspired. What but a short time ago had appeared to him like the *fata morgana* of his dreams, had become the object of sober reflection. However, it was no easy task to open the way to the palace of the Bourbons! Till then the representatives of the people had held their sittings in the Tuileries. It was impossible to turn out these men all on a sudden; such a measure would have roused at once the suspicions of all true Republicans, from whom the wish of restoring the monarchy must carefully be hidden. It was necessary, before adjourning to the Tuileries, to make the people believe that a man might be a good republican, even though he entertained a desire to sleep in the bedchamber of the King.

Before, therefore, the consuls changed their residence, the Palace of the Tuileries was ornamented and altered in a manner befitting its new destiny. In one of its galleries the bust of the elder Brutus was placed, which had been brought by Napoleon from Italy; and Monsieur David was employed to add some more statues, representing heroes of Republican Greece or Rome, and which were distributed through various rooms.

A number of Republicans, who after the 13th of Vendémiaire had been banished, received leave to return to France; and as just then the news of Washington's death arrived, Napoleon ordered that the army should mourn for ten days. Each soldier had to wear a stripe of crape round his arm, and the regimental colours and bugles were wrapt up in the same stuff. When these ten days had passed away, when France and her army had sufficiently manifested their grief for the death of the great Republican, the three consuls made their entry into the Tuileries. They entered by the great front-gate, on either side of which stood a tree of liberty, that bore the Republican inscriptions of 1792. On the tree on

the right there was the date, "10th of August," whilst that on the left displayed the following motto:—"Royalty has been prostrated in France, and will never rise again!"

Between these two suggestive trees Bonaparte and his colleagues entered the Tuileries. A long line of carriages followed them, and enlivened the streets of Paris, but the splendour and magnificence that afterwards characterized the solemnities of Imperial France were wanting on the present occasion. There was but one brilliant carriage; it was that wherein the consuls were seated, and which was drawn by the six white horses that had been given to Napoleon by the Emperor of Austria. Most of the other vehicles were hackney-coaches, the numbers of which had been covered over with paper. New France had not yet had time to get her state-carriages built, and those of Old France had been so horribly defiled that they had become valueless for ever. In the September days of 1793 they had been used as hearses for the carcases of dogs.

At that time there were thousands of masterless dogs in Paris, which had formerly belonged to the aristocracy, but now ran about the streets,

feeding on the blood that flowed in torrents from the guillotine, and discoloured the streets of Paris. This horrible nourishment had given back to these dogs all their innate ferocity and blood-thirstiness. Those persons who had been lucky enough to escape the guillotine were now in danger of being torn to pieces by these furious animals; and, since the dogs made no distinction between aristocrats and Republicans, but attacked both with equal impartiality, it became necessary to destroy these new enemies of the Republic. Consequently, an armed force surrounded the Champs Elysées, drove their canine adversaries through the Rue Royale to the Place Royal, and there killed them by musketry discharges. Within a single day upwards of 3000 dogs were destroyed, whose bodies lay scattered about in the streets. They there remained for three days, a dispute having arisen amongst the authorities as to whose business it was to remove them.

At last, compelled by necessity, the Convention took it upon themselves to look to the matter, and gave orders to Monsieur Gasparin to take the necessary measures. This gentleman contrived to convert the burial of the dogs into a Republic-

an demonstration. As the animals had belonged to the *ci-devants* they ought fairly to be carried to their graves with aristocratic honours.

Gasparin collected all the state-carriages of the murdered or exiled nobility, and in these glittering vehicles, with their armorial bearings, he placed the carcases of the dogs. Six royal carriages opened the procession, and behind the glistening window-panes could be seen the tails, legs, and heads of the victims of the Place Royal piled up in wild disorder.

After this demonstration of Republican France it was impossible ever again to use the carriages of the nobility, and decent coaches therefore were scarce on the day of the consuls' entry into the Tuileries.

With this entrance of Napoleon into the Tuileries the Revolution ended. Bonaparte laid his victorious sword across the yawning, sanguinary abyss, which had drunk up indifferently the blood of aristocrats and democrats; and he converted this sword into a bridge, over which the nation passed out of one century into the next, and from the Republic into the Empire.

When Napoleon, on the morning after the re-

moval to the Tuileries, walked with Josephine and Hortense through the Gallery of Diana to inspect the statues he had ordered to be placed there, he stopped before the bust of the younger Brutus, close to whom stood a statuette of Cæsar. Bonaparte gazed for a long time thoughtfully on these two solemn, earnest forms. Then, as if awaking from a dream, he proudly raised his head, and placing his hand upon Josephine's shoulder, said in an energetic tone,

"It is not enough to be in the Tuileries, a man must also understand how to remain there! How many have already dwelled within these walls! Yea, even highwaymen and Conventionals. Did I not see with mine own eyes how the wild Jacobins and the cohorts of the *sansculottes* besieged good King Louis and carried him off a prisoner? But do not fear, Josephine, they may come again, if they dare!"

While Bonaparte stood thus and spoke before the statues of Brutus and Julius Cæsar, his voice echoed like rolling thunder through the long gallery, and made the forms of the heroes of the ancient republics tremble again on their pedestals.

Napoleon raised his arm menacingly towards

the bust of Brutus, as if he meant to challenge in this stern Republican, who murdered Cæsar, Republican France, to whom he intended to become a Cæsar and an Augustus at the same time.

The Revolution was at an end: Bonaparte, with his wife and children, lived in the Tuileries. The son and the daughter of that General Beauharnois whom the Republic murdered had found a second father, who was destined to avenge this murder on the Republic itself.

The Revolution was assuredly at an end.

CHAPTER IX.

A FIRST LOVE.

When the Revolution was ended, and Bonaparte had taken possession of the Tuileries, there followed a time of merry-making and rejoicing. Josephine and Hortense were the nucleus of these festivities, the two fairies that animated them, and gave them splendour and significance.

Hortense was passionately fond of dancing, and none of the ladies of Josephine's court equalled her in gracefulness and taste. We see that people spoke already of the "court" of Madame Bonaparte. Was she not the wife of

the first consul of France? She gave audiences, and possessed, as well as Hortense, a suite, who approached her with the same humility as if they had been princesses of the blood.

Madame Bonaparte drove now in a carriage, drawn by six horses, through the streets of Paris, and was surrounded by a detachment of cavalry. Wheresoever the people caught sight of her or Hortense, they hailed them enthusiastically The consul's coachmen and servants had assumed a livery, for they appeared in great coats, richly embroidered with gold and aiguilettes. He had his chamberlains and footmen, his outriders and grooms, splendid soirées and dinners were given, and foreign ambassadors were received in solemn audience. For by this time all the European powers had recognized the Republic under the Consulate; and as Napoleon had now made peace with England aud Austria, both these countries sent representatives to the court of the mighty first consul.

War with foreign foes was over. But a contest had still to be maintained within the very walls of the Tuileries that still raged fiercely, and it was the contest of etiquette and taste. Whether

or not hair-powder should be worn was the great question of fashion that filled every drawing-room, and it was finally settled by Josephine saying, that "people might come to court as they liked, provided they consulted good taste in the choice of their toilette."

For some time past, however, Hortense had taken a less lively part than usual in the fêtes and amusements; she no longer seemed to derive great gratification from the festivities of the court, but preferred retirement and seclusion in her own apartments. The soft melancholy notes of her harp seemed to charm her more than the witty and polite conversation in her mother's salons.

Hortense sought solitude, because to solitude alone could she open her heart, to it only could she whisper the fact that she loved with all the innocence and fervency, all the energy and self-denial, of a first love. How delightful did these hours of wakeful dreaming appear to her! The future presented itself to her eye as one long and glorious summer day, that was just dawning, and whose sun she shortly expected to rise.

Hortense's choice had the secret sanction of

her mother and Bonaparte, but both pretended not to see anything of the attachment she had formed for General Duroc, the first aide-de-camp of her step-father. The only distinction was that Josephine considered her daughter's love not very deep-rooted; she mistook it for the playful, capricious liking of a child; but Napoleon saw more clearly, and seriously thought of uniting the young couple. For that purpose it was necessary to raise Duroc to a higher rank. And this officer accordingly received the post of an ambassador, and was sent to St Petersburg, where Alexander I. had just ascended the throne of his fathers, to congratulate the new emperor on the part of the first consul.

The lovers, constantly watched, and ever under the eye of the now dominant etiquette, did not even enjoy the melancholy consolation of bidding each other farewell with a last unnoticed pressure of the hand, or of vowing once more eternal love and fidelity, when the hour of parting arrived. But they reposed faith in the future; they looked forward to Duroc's return, and the grant of the high prize which Bonaparte had hinted to his aide-de-camp should be his own. This prize was

nothing less than Hortense's hand. Until this joyful day arrived, the lovers were compelled to content themselves with the consolation of all separated lovers, with writing letters, which reached their address by the aid of a man of discretion, a Monsieur de Bourienne, who was Bonaparte's private secretary.

"I used to play with Mademoiselle Hortense almost every morning," says Bourienne, in his *Mémoires*, "a game at billiards, for which she had a particular liking. Whenever I said, in a whisper, 'I have a letter for you,' the game immediately ceased, she hastened to her room, and I followed to give her the letter. Her eyes were frequently filled with tears of joy and emotion, and not until a considerable time had elapsed would she return to the billiard-room whither I had preceded her."

Thus Hortense was dreaming of future happiness, indifferent to almost everything that passed around her. She little thought how her young heart was about to be crushed, and how she was to be made the instrument of domestic and political intrigues.

Bonaparte's brothers, envious and jealous of

the influence the first consul's wife continued to exercise over her husband, as in the early days of their union, wished to separate Hortense from her mother, for they considered her one of the most important mainstays of Josephine's power. By thus isolating Josephine, they thought they would be able to acquire a greater influence over their brother, for they well knew how strongly attached Bonaparte was to the children of his wife, and had not yet forgotten how, on a former occasion, they alone had prevented a separation between Bonaparte and Josephine.

When returning from Egypt, the consul's jealousy had been roused by his brothers and Junot, who artfully insinuated that Josephine had not, during his absence, been altogether faithful. Bonaparte had almost made up his mind to separate from his wife, although he still loved her passionately, when Bourienne succeeded in persuading him at least to hear Josephine before condemning her. This saved her. Bonaparte replied to his secretary's intercession:

"It is impossible to forgive her! I forgive her! If I do so I will tear my heart out of my breast and cast it into the fire!" and as Napoleon

thus spoke, in a voice trembling with passion, he seized his breast with his hands, as if preparing to rend it asunder. But on the morning after this conversation, when Napoleon entered his study, he smilingly, and in some embarrassment, approached Bourienne, and said:

"Well, you will be satisfied with me, she is here. But you must not suppose that I have forgiven her! Indeed I have not. On the contrary, I am very angry with her, and sent her away. But when she left me in tears I went after her; and as she walked sobbing down the stairs I saw Eugène and Hortense, who stood weeping on the foot of the staircase. I had not the heart to see tears flow and remain unmoved. Eugène accompanied me to Egypt; I have accustomed myself to look upon him as my adopted son, and he is such a brave, such a noble-minded young man! Hortense is just about to come out in the world, and everyone that knows her is full of her praise. I confess, Bourienne, that the sight of these children moved me deeply. I became sad myself in seeing them weep, and I said to myself, Shall they suffer for the guilt of their mother? I called Eugène back, Hortense followed him

with Josephine; could I prevent it? It is impossible for man to be mortal and not have his weak moments."

"Depend upon it, General," replied Bourienne, "that your adopted children will show themselves grateful for your kindness."

"I hope they will, I hope they will, for they cost me a great sacrifice."

Josephine soon afterwards was enabled to prove her entire innocence, and Bonaparte was thus rewarded for his generosity by learning that the accusations of his jealous brothers were unjust.

Under these circumstances, Napoleon's brothers were naturally anxious to place Hortense at a distance from her mother. She was gifted with so superior a mind, so much tact, and such an acute and sober understanding, that she was a perfect Mentor to her mother. Josephine, vain and extravagant as she was, would, in spite of her loveliness, have been no very formidable antagonist if once deprived of the support of her daughter.

Hortense once got out of the way, it would have been comparatively easy to discard Jose-

phine; for discarded she was to be. She was an obstacle and hindrance in the ambitious career of Napoleon's brothers. They well knew they could not ascend to the greatness they coveted through themselves, they knew that Napoleon alone was capable of covering their brows with a crown, and therefore it was necessary that he himself should wear the proud symbol of royalty. Josephine was averse to the project, she loved her husband disinterestedly enough to fear the dangers attending the usurpation of a crown, and possessed too little ambition not to prefer her present peaceful station to the more exalted but more perilous seat on a throne.

It was necessary, then, that Josephine should be removed. Bonaparte must choose another wife, in whose veins the blood of legitimate royalty flowed, and who on that account should not object to her husband wearing the purple.

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS BONAPARTE AND DUROC.

The first thing Bonaparte's brothers busied themselves with was the removal of Hortense. They represented to Bonaparte how passionately she and Duroc loved each other, how they used to keep up an intimate correspondence, and proposed to send Duroc to Italy, where he might hold a higher rank than that which he occupied at present, and thus be in a station to receive Hortense's hand. But secrecy, utter secrecy, was to be observed in the carrying out of this plan, and Josephine must remain ignorant of their intrigues.

They, therefore, persuaded Napoleon (who in little things was easily to be deceived, because his mind was occupied with great ones) to keep the projected marriage secret, so as agreeably to surprise both the young couple and his wife.

But Josephine for once had seen through the intrigues of her hostile brothers-in-law. She was conscious that her whole future, her very existence, depended entirely on the possibility of her acquiring friends and allies amongst her husband's family.

There was but one of Napoleon's brothers who was not hostile to her, who, on the contrary, loved and esteemed Josephine, because she was the wife of a dearly-beloved brother, and this one was Louis, the youngest of Napoleon's brothers. Louis was of a quiet, contemplative disposition, more a scholar than a soldier, and better fitted for the study than for the council-hall or the camp. But in this shy, modest, almost effeminate form lurked an energy and a courage that never failed to make their appearance in the hour of danger and decision, and which neither entreaties nor threats were able to vanquish. His outward appearance was somewhat ungrace-

ful, even awkward, but he could assume dignity when called upon to play a prominent part. And his large blue eyes, more accustomed to look within than without, would, in such instances, be lit up with a flash of high resolve.

His was one of those sterling, but apparently insignificent characters, that are rarely understood and valued, because in the bustle of life people have no leisure to examine them carefully. A mother or a sister is alone capable of appreciating men like these, for long continued intimacy and close observation have enabled them to see the bud of this sensitive plant expand, which in contact with a rough world shuts itself up. Such men will seldom find a woman to love them; for they are too shy to seek her, and appear too insignificant to be sought after.

This youngest brother of her husband, who was scarcely four-and-twenty years of age, seemed to Josephine the best suited to become her ally of all the members of her husband's family.

Louis, next to her Napoleon, was the best-beloved child of Madame Lætitia, and the spoiled favourite of all his brothers, who had nothing to fear either from his ambition or his egotism. He

never crossed their plans or mixed in their affairs; he asked for nothing in return but to be allowed the same liberty, and be left to follow his favourite pursuits. He was the confidant of his sisters, who always found in him a wise counsellor, who never betrayed them hastily. He was particularly liked by Napoleon, who esteemed him on account of his noble qualities, and because he was never importuned by him as he was by his other brothers. For the ambition and avarice of Jérôme, Joseph, and Lucien were sources of continual vexation to Bonaparte.

"On hearing my brothers, and the impudence with which they daily demand new sums, it might really be supposed that I had spent their patrimony," Napoleon said one day to Bourienne, after a spirited scene he had had with Jérôme, which as usual ended with the latter receiving a fresh order on the private funds of the first consul.

Jérôme, the youngest of Napoleon's brothers, was also the most reckless: and we take from the first volume of his recently-published Memoirs a characteristic anecdote.

Jérôme was at the age of fifteen the spoiled

child of the first consul, whose paternal surveillance was more than once routed by his ardent and determined nature.

One day the young student escaped from the Tuileries and took a walk on the Boulevards. He selected the best-looking shop for toilet articles, and walked in to inspect them. Not finding anything handsome enough to his taste, he asked to be shown the best things they had, in an artistic as well as a costly sense. The tradesman, astonished at the lad's coolness, hesitated ere showing him a dressing-case that cost 16,000 francs.

"That will do," said Jérôme; "send it to the Tuileries, and the first consul's aide-de-camp will pay."

He went out, and the case was really sent to the Tuileries. Duroc, supposing that General Bonaparte had purchased the article, paid for it, and entered the amount on the list of payments he daily laid before the first consul. The latter, in amazement, asked what it meant? Duroc related what had happened. The tradesman was sent for, and all was explained. At dinner-time Bonaparte entered the room, where everybody was

waiting. Taking Jérôme by the ears, he said to him:

"So it is you, sir, who think proper to buy a dressing-case at 16,000 francs?"

"Ah! yes!" the lad answered, without the slightest embarrassment, "that is my way. I only like handsome things."

Mademoiselle de Cochelet is responsible for another capital anecdote about this young Prince.

Jérôme happened one day to have an absolute necessity for twenty-five louis, for his purse was completely empty, although General Murat, the Governor of Paris, who was most deeply attached to him, frequently helped him with his. But this time such a resource entirely failed, and the quarter's *pension* he received from the Emperor had been spent in advance. What was to be done? to whom should he apply? to his other brothers? They were absent—Joseph and Louis were with their regiments, and Lucien was Ambassador at Lisbon or Madrid. As for his mother, she would not listen to reason in the matter of money to be given to a young scapegrace whom she dearly loved, but to whom she was more prodigal of her lectures than of her

money. The idea occurred to him of paying a visit to his uncle, Cardinal Fesch. He went to him, and was most kindly received, and as there was a large dinner-party that day, he was invited to stay. When dinner was over, the guests proceeded to the drawing-room, to drink their coffee. At this moment Jérôme saw the Cardinal go into an adjoining room; he followed, and drawing into a window this beloved uncle, whom he had frequently cajoled, he made his request, but met with a point-blank refusal.

The Cardinal, as everybody knows, was a great admirer of pictures, and the room in which he then was formed the commencement of his splendid gallery. On hearing this positive refusal, Jérôme suddenly turned round—

"There is an old rogue," he said, "who seems to be laughing at the affront I have just endured! I must avenge myself."

At the same time he drew his sabre, and pointed it at the face of a noble old man, painted by Vandyke, and prepared to dig out his eyes. We can imagine in what a state the Cardinal was in on seeing a *chef-d'œuvre* on the point of being transfixed; he tried to take the young man by the

arm, but he would not listen to reason till the twenty-five louis were paid him. The uncle capitulated, peace was made, and they embraced. The joke was considered excellent, and the first consul, when told of it a few days later, was greatly amused at it.

Now Louis never asked for money. He was always satisfied with what Bonaparte gave him on his own accord, and his brother had never to pay any debts for him, or any disputes to settle for him with his tradesmen.

This last circumstance inspired Josephine with a feeling approaching to awe for her young brother-in-law. He was such a good manager, he never had any debts! Now she never could avoid contracting them, for economy was a quality unknown to her. How often and how disagreeably had these debts already embarrassed her; how frequently had they already drawn upon her the blame and displeasure of her husband; how repeatedly had she promised never to buy again without being able to pay! Yet debts she contracted, again and again. Josephine was of a generous, rather careless, disposition; she was unable to check herself in this one point, and how-

ever much she feared Napoleon's angry looks or words, they were unable to restrain her from prodigality,—the penitent sinner ever relapsed into fresh sin.

Louis, with his economical disposition, appeared to be a fit husband for the prudent, deliberate Hortense; Josephine thought they would live very happily together, and manage their hearts as cleverly as they did their purses. She therefore resolved to make Louis Bonaparte her son-in-law, and at the same time he would be a proper ally to uphold her influence in the family of his brother. Josephine had already a painful presentiment of her unhappy future; she would fancy the Imperial Eagle that soared above her head an evil omen, and believed she could hear awful lamenting voices in the stillness of the night.

The negress at Martinique had said that she was to be "even more than a queen," it is true, but another fortune-teller, whom she had consulted at Paris (the celebrated Madame Villeneuve), had told her that although she was destined to wear a crown, she "would wear it for a little while only."

For a little while only? Why, she was too young, too happy to believe death at hand,—what then could the prophecy mean? The danger that threatened her must be a divorce. She had borne Napoleon no children, and yet he would have liked so much to have a son! His brothers told him daily it was a political necessity that he should have an heir.

Josephine dared not think further on the subject, she trembled for her future, and looked anxiously around her to find a support that might prevent her fall. With the selfishness of grief she demanded of her daughter that she should sacrifice the dream of her happiness to the real welfare of her mother.

And yet Hortense loved. Her young heart revolted at the thought of forsaking her love to marry a man for whom she felt no affection, and who himself had never paid the slightest attention to her. She considered it almost impossible that any one should seriously expect her to give up her pure and passionate love to benefit cold calculation, to further a family intrigue. She vowed to herself that she would die rather than forsake her lover.

"But Duroc has no fortune or prospects to offer you, my child," Josephine objected; "all he is, he is through Bonaparte. He has no rank, no name. If Napoleon were to cease interesting himself for him, he must sink back into insignificance and obscurity."

Hortense answered, smiling through her tears, "that she loved him, and knew no other ambition than that of being his wife."

"But he! Do you think he too knows no other ambition than being your husband? Do you believe he loves you for the sake of your own self?"

"I know he does!" the maiden replied, with sparkling eyes. "Duroc has told me so many times; he loves me, and only me. He has vowed to love me eternally. We two ask for nothing better than to be allowed to belong to each other."

Josephine shrugged her shoulders almost pitifully, as she answered:

"But I know that Duroc only wishes to marry you because he is ambitious, and thinks that Napoleon will promote him all the more rapidly for being your husband."

"That is a base calumny! it is impossible that it should be so," replied Hortense, with a flush of anger on her cheek. "Duroc loves me, and his noble soul is incapable of selfish calculation."

"Suppose I could prove to you the contrary!" Josephine persisted, exasperated by the resistance of her daughter, and cruel in her fears for her own happiness.

Hortense turned pale, and her enthusiastic, glorious confidence was changed into sickly apprehension.

"If this be in thy power, mother," she said, in a scarcely audible voice, "if Duroc really only loves me as an instrument of his ambition —then I am ready to forget him and marry whomsoever you like."

Josephine triumphed.

"To-day," she said, "Duroc returns from his journey; within three days I shall have proved to you that he does not love you, but merely wishes to be related to Bonaparte."

Hortense heard nothing but the first words of her mother's reply, "To-day Duroc returns." What did she care for the rest? She was to see him again, to derive new confidence and faith from

a glance at his handsome, manly face. But she required no strengthening of her faith in him, for she believed in him. How could she suffer the slightest distrust to arise in her mind and disturb the blessed happiness of their meeting?

Josephine's beautiful hands meanwhile were busily engaged in drawing more closely together the net of her intrigue. She required an ally from amongst her husband's family to maintain herself in her position, and hence Louis must become Hortense's husband.

Bonaparte himself was opposed to a union of his brother with his step-daughter, and was firmly resolved to give Hortense to Duroc. But Josephine understood how to shake his resolution. She wept and implored, caressed and pouted, until he promised her that, if what she said was true, if Duroc only wanted to marry Hortense because he considered the match an advantageous one, he would not object to the girl's being married to his brother. However, he first meant to test his aide-de-camp.

Shortly after his conversation with Josephine, Napoleon returned to his study, where Bourienne, as usual, was sitting at the writing-table.

"Where is Duroc?" the first consul asked, abruptly.

"He is gone out. I believe he is at the Opera."

"As soon as he returns, tell him that, in accordance with my promise, he can marry Hortense. But it must be done within two days. I will give my step-daughter a dowry of 500,000 francs. I nominate Duroc commander of the 8th division, but the day after his wedding he must go with his wife to Toulon, and we shall always live separated. I should not like to have a son-in-law in my house. As I wish to bring this affair to a close, once for all, you will let me know this very night whether or not Duroc accepts my conditions."

"I don't think he will, General."

"Very good. In that case, Hortense will marry my brother Louis."

"But will she consent to do so?"

"She will be obliged to consent, Bourienne."

Late in the evening Duroc returned, and Bourienne communicated to him, word for word, the ultimatum of the first consul.

Duroc listened attentively, and without in-

terrupting the speaker, but his face became more and more overcast as the secretary proceeded to deliver his message.

"If such be the case," he replied, when Bourienne had finished, "if Bonaparte can do no more for his son-in-law, I shall be obliged to renounce the idea of marrying Hortense. It will grieve me deeply to be obliged to do so, but I will not go to Toulon. I want to remain at Paris."

And without the slightest emotion or sign of grief, Duroc took his hat and left the room.

The same evening Josephine received her husband's consent to the union between her daughter and Louis Bonaparte.

The same evening, too, Josephine informed Hortense that Duroc had failed to stand the test, that he had renounced her through ambitious motives, just as he had loved her through a selfish motive.

Hortense looked fixedly at her mother. Not a tear was in her eye, no word of complaint passed her lips, she felt no other consciousness than that of a lightning flash having struck her

and destroyed her love, her hope, her happiness eternally.

But she had no longer the courage and energy to flee from the fate that threatened her, and she quietly submitted. As love itself had betrayed her, she no longer cared what shape her future assumed. She knew that happiness was irrevocably lost. For he, the only man she ever loved, had deceived her, and life's perfume was crushed under foot for ever.

The next morning Hortense composedly, even smilingly, entered Josephine's room, and declared her willingness to fulfil her mother's wishes. She no longer objected to marry Louis Bonaparte.

Josephine joyfully embraced her daughter. She little thought what a night of agony, what a night of prayer and despair, Hortense had passed. She little suspected that her daughter's seeming composure was nothing but the despairing resignation of a broken heart.

Hortense smiled, for Duroc must not see how she suffered. Her love for him was dead, but the pride of a betrayed woman still lived

within her. It was this pride that wiped away her tears, and summoned up a smile to her pale lip.

Josephine had gained her object. A brother of Bonaparte thus became her son-in-law. There was one doubt left only. Would this son-in-law protect her against her husband's two remaining brothers.

CHAPTER XI.

CONSUL OR KING?

Two days only elapsed between the engagement and the marriage of the young couple. On the 7th of January, 1802, Hortense became the wife of Louis Bonaparte. Napoleon, who himself had preferred a civil ceremony, and had never given his marriage with Josephine the consecration of the Church, wished that his brother and Hortense should be united by a more sacred tie. And never did marriage more require the blessing of Heaven than in their case! Perhaps Napoleon thought that the consciousness of an irrevocable union would

stimulate the newly-married people to an honourable and conscientious endeavour to produce a mutual affection; perhaps, though, he merely intended to remove every possibility of a divorce. However this may have been, the Cardinal Caprera, after the civil contract had been signed, was summoned to the Tuileries to bestow the blessing of the Church on the young couple.

Not a word, not a look was exchanged between husband and wife. Silently they entered the carriage which was to take them to their home. They resided in the same small house, in the Rue de la Victoire, which during the first weeks of their union had served Bonaparte and Josephine as a domicile.

At that time a happy couple had crossed its threshold, but the couple that now took possession of it brought no love and no happiness with them. Josephine had entered it with a face radiant with joy, Hortense's cheek was pale, and in her eye a tear trembled.

Louis, too, had been adverse to the marriage. He did not love his wife. They both disliked each other. Hortense could never forgive him for having accepted her hand, knowing, as he did,

that her heart belonged to another, and Louis thought it wrong of her to have consented to become his wife, although he never had told her that he loved her.

They both had obeyed that iron will which laid down laws, not only for France, but for the family. Both had married from obedience, not from love, and the consciousness of this compulsion stood between the two proud, independent characters as an insurmountable barrier.

They did not even attempt to like each other, did not endeavour to find in their hearts that happiness which they were not allowed to seek elsewhere. Brilliantly attired, but pale and melancholy, Hortense appeared at the festivities that took place in honour of her marriage. With a gloomy countenance Louis received the congratulations of friends and courtiers. While every one seemed to be joyous, while singing and dancing, laughing and merrymaking, were kept up, the young couple alone were sad and taciturn. Louis avoided speaking to his wife, and she turned from him that he might not see the cold indifference imprinted on her face.

However, they were both compelled to accept

their fate. They were chained to each other, and must try at least to endure living together. Hortense, although apparently gentle, flexible, and maidenly, had yet a stout and energetic heart. She was too proud to allow any one to pity her; she only wept when alone, and forced herself to smile whenever she entered society—for Duroc must not see the traces of tears on her cheek.

But although Hortense had banished love from her heart, the wound caused by so doing remained. Though she no longer hoped to be happy, her youth and her womanly self-esteem revolted at the idea of being henceforth nothing but a slave. She said to herself, "It must be possible to live happily without being happy. I will try it."

She did try. She laughed again and danced, she attended the festivities that took place at St Cloud, Malmaison, and in the Tuileries, and which seemed to be the swan's song of the dying Republic—or the cradle-song of the new-born monarchy—which you will.

The day was fast approaching when the French nation would have to choose between a

sham republic and a real monarchy. France had ceased already to be a Republic in reality. Monarchy, it is true, was as yet nothing more than a newly-born, naked infant, but all that was wanting was a bold hand, possessing sufficient courage, to clothe it with the purple, and the infant would then become a strong, powerful man.

Bonaparte had the courage to do so. He had the still greater courage to do it slowly and with deliberation. He allowed the infant "Monarchy," that lay naked and helpless at his feet, to wither for some time longer; and to keep it from perishing of cold he covered it with the cloak of a "life-consulate." Beneath this mantle the child might rest warm, and slumber for a few weeks until its purple swaddling-clothes were ready.

Bonaparte, by the will of the nation, had become consul for life. Like General Monk, he stood at the foot of the throne, and he had the alternative of restoring it to an exiled king, or ascending it himself. Napoleon's brothers wished the latter, Josephine prayed that the contrary should take place. She was too much a loving wife to nourish hopes of headlong ambition, too anxious

to secure her domestic happiness to be willing to risk it. If Bonaparte placed a crown on his head, he would be obliged to think of becoming the founder of a new dynasty, and strengthening his throne, and would therefore wish to have a son. But Josephine had given him no children, she knew that Jérôme and Lucien had already more than once proposed to their brother a dissolution of his barren marriage; to her, therefore, Napoleon's coronation signified—divorce.

She loved her husband too selfishly to be willing to sacrifice her happiness to his greatness. Besides, at the bottom of her heart she was a Royalist, and called the Count de Lille, who had found an asylum at Hartwell, the legitimate King of France.

The letters which the Count de Lille (afterwards Louis XVIII.) had written to Bonaparte deeply affected her. She besought her husband to reply kindly and in a conciliatory manner to the unfortunate brother of the beheaded king; she even ventured to beg that Bonaparte should do what Louis demanded from him, and restore to the exile the throne of his fathers. Napoleon had regarded her proposals as a jest; he consider-

ed it impossible that anyone should expect him to lay down his laurels at the foot of a throne which was to be occupied by a Bourbon instead of himself.

Louis had written to Bonaparte as follows:

"I cannot believe that the hero of Lodi, Castiglione, and Arcole, that the conqueror of Italy and Egypt, should not prefer real glory to vain celebrity. But by hesitation you lose precious time. We might now secure the greatness of France. I say *we*, because I require a Bonaparte to do it, and because he would be incapable of accomplishing it without me."

Bonaparte was of opinion that he might put "I" instead of "we;" he felt himself quite equal to the task of securing the greatness of France, and therefore returned the following answer:

"You cannot wish to return to France, since you would be obliged to pass over the dead bodies of a hundred thousand Frenchmen. Sacrifice your interest to the peace and welfare of your country. History will know how to appreciate it."

Louis, in his letter to Napoleon, had said: "You are at liberty to choose your post and that of your friends." Napoleon made use of the per-

mission, but unfortunately he selected the post the Count de Lille had meant to reserve for himself.

Josephine, we repeat, would have been glad to see the king return to France, if by doing so she could keep her husband. She desired no crown, she was admired and honoured enough without it. Bourienne one day said to her:

"You will hardly be able to avoid becoming a queen or an empress."

When Josephine heard these words she wept, and said:

"But I have no ambition to be a queen. If I can always be the wife of Bonaparte, the first consul, I am perfectly satisfied. Tell him that, Bourienne; beseech him not to make himself a king."

Nor did Josephine stop here. She herself had the courage to try and dissuade her husband from his ambitious plan.

One day, when Bonaparte had shown himself particularly good-humoured at breakfast, she entered his study, without having announced her coming, and noiselessly approaching him from be-

hind, put her arm round his neck, and then sat down on his lap. She looked full in his pale face, and affectionately stroking his hair, said:

"I implore you, Bonaparte, do not make yourself a king. I know your wicked brother Lucien would fain persuade you to it, but do not listen to him."

Bonaparte laughed. "You see ghosts where there are none, my poor Josephine. Your old widows from the Faubourg St Germain, and before all your La Rochefoucauld, have told you these fables. But they annoy me, so do not trouble me with them again."

Bonaparte, who had answered his wife's advice with an evasive jest, now began to speak seriously to his confidential councillors on the subject of placing a crown on his head. In the course of a conversation on this matter, Bourienne said to him:

"As first consul you are the most celebrated man in Europe; but if you ascend a throne, you will be the youngest king, and rank behind every one of them."

Bonaparte's eyes glistened as he heard this

reply, and with that peculiar expression which was called to his features in the moment of important decision, he answered:

"The youngest king!—well, then, I will drive all the princes from their thrones, and then I must surely be recognised as the oldest!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE CALUMNY.

Hortense's marriage with Bonaparte's brother did not produce the results for which Josephine had hoped. She had made a bad choice; for Louis, of all the first consul's brothers, was the least desirous to interfere in politics or intrigues. Moreover, Louis no longer felt the same friendship as before for Josephine. His open and honest heart accused her of having acted basely and selfishly in sacrificing her daughter's happiness to her own interests. He was angry with her for having obliged him to marry without love,

and although he did not, as yet, place himself in the ranks of Josephine's enemies, he had already ceased to be her friend.

The life led by the newly-married couple was a strange and unusual one. They openly confessed to each other their mutual dislike; they acknowledged that force only had united them. In this strange open heartedness they went so far as to pity each other as friends, on account of the misery they experienced as man and wife. They repeatedly expressed their conviction that they should never be able to love; but their compassion for each other gradually became so intense that it might have easily been converted into affection.

Already would Louis sit for hours with his wife, endeavouring to amuse her by a witty conversation; and Hortense began to consider it her most sacred and sweetest duty to make her husband forget, by kindly showing him all possible attention, how miserable he was at her side. They both hoped that the child they expected would indemnify them for an unhappy union and the freedom they had lost.

"If I should give you a son," Hortense said

with a smile, "when he first addressed you by the sweet title of father you would perhaps forgive me for being his mother."

"And in pressing that son to your heart, in feeling how dearly you love him, you might forget that it is I who am his father. You will at least cease to hate me, for I shall be the father of your beloved child."

Very probably, if the young people had been left to themselves they would have learned to understand each other—would have overcome misfortune—and hatred would have been changed into love. But the world treated them cruelly: it crushed with a merciless hand the germ of affection that had begun to develope itself in Hortense's heart.

Josephine had married her daughter to her brother-in-law, in order to retain her by her side. Her enemies knew this, and therefore made this daughter the object of incessant attacks and malicious calumnies. They wanted to try another way by which to separate Hortense from her mother. As it had been impossible to effect the desired result by a marrage, it was now to be attempted whether calumny would serve their turn.

For that purpose a rumour was set afloat that Bonaparte had married Hortense to his brother, only because himself loved her, and because he had been jealous of Duroc. Many pushed these abominable calumnies so far as to insinuate that the child Hortense bore under her heart was related more closely to Napoleon than as the offspring of his brother.

This was an infamous calumny, but it was one that was well calculated. They well knew how much Napoleon hated even the rumour of such things, how strict he was in his principles, and how offensive therefore it must be to him to find himself the object of such suspicions.

They thought that, in order to silence similar rumours, he would remove Louis and Hortense from Paris. Then Josephine would have been left alone, and it would have been more easy to deprive her of her influence, and to separate Napoleon from the guardian angel who said to him, "Do not make yourself a king! Be satisfied with being the greatest man of your age! Do not place a crown on your head!"

In Paris these calumnies were only whispered, but abroad they were repeated in a more open

manner. Bonaparte's enemies seized this opportunity to wound him as a man! since as hero he was proof against all their attacks.

One morning Napoleon was reading an English newspaper which had always been hostile to him, and which, as he well knew, was the organ of the Count of Artois, who lived at Hartwell. All at once an angry cloud covered his forehead. With an indignant gesture he crumpled the paper in his hand. Then his face brightened again, and a proud smile appeared on it. He rose, ordered the master of the ceremonies to wait on him, and commanded that the necessary invitations for a ball should be issued, which was to take place the next day at St Cloud. This being done, Bonaparte went to Josephine to inform her of the arrangements he had just made, and to tell her that she must prevail on Hortense to appear at the ball, however indisposed she might be.

Hortense was too much accustomed implicitly to obey the commands of her step-father to attempt any opposition. She rose from her *chaise longue*, where, for some weeks past, she had been in the habit of resting, and commanded her ladies to dress her for the ball. She felt ill and uneasy in

her gorgeous attire, which so little suited her frame of mind and her figure, but the kind yielding woman dared not even complain, in thought of the constraint her step-father's order imposed on her.

At the appointed hour she was in the ball-room at St Cloud; Bonaparte came to meet her with a courteous smile, but instead of thanking her for having appeared at all, he at once asked her to dance.

Hortense, in great astonishment, looked up to his face. She knew that Napoleon, generally speaking, disliked the sight of an *enciente* woman; he had often remarked that he thought it excessively offensive to the eye, and indecent to see a woman dance when in such a condition, and now he himself asked *her* to do so?

Hortense hence refused to comply with the first consul's wish, but Bonaparte became more and more pressing in his demand.

"You know how much I like to see you dance, Hortense," he said, with the most engaging smile; "do just dance for once, I should consider it a particular favour, if it only be a quadrille."

And Hortense, although with reluctance, and deeply blushing at such an exposure, obeyed her step-father.

This scene took place at night; how great therefore was Hortense's astonishment to read in the next morning's newspaper a piece of poetry, which applauded in the most flattering terms her amiability for having danced a quadrille, in spite of her expectation of being confined within a few weeks.

Hortense did not feel at all flattered, but, on the contrary, offended by the poet's emphatic lines. She hastened to the Tuileries to complain of it, and to inquire of her mother how it was that the newspaper could print in the morning what had occurred upon the previous night. Bonaparte, who was with Josephine when Hortense entered, and to whom she addressed herself first, replied with a smile and in an evasive manner and left the room. Hortense now turned to her mother, who, downcast, and with tears in her eyes, was reclining on a sofa. Josephine knew how matters stood, for Napoleon had told the truth, and her heart was yet too full of grief and resentment to be able to keep the secret.

She told her daughter that Bonaparte had only asked her to dance a quadrille because he had already ordered Monsieur Esmenard to write a panegyric on it, and that the whole ball had simply been arranged in order that Hortense might dance, and the poem relating to her appear in the newspaper.

When Hortense inquired the reasons of all these intrigues, Josephine had the cruel courage to inform her daughter of the malicious rumour that had been set afloat; had the cruelty to tell her that Napoleon had ordered poem, quadrille, and ball, because he had lately read in an English newspaper the calumnious statement that Madame Louis Bonaparte had been delivered of a strong healthy boy, several weeks previously, and he was determined to give this article the lie.

Hortense received this new wound with a smile of contempt. She had no word of indignation for this infamons calumny; she did not weep, did not complain; but as she rose to leave her mother she fainted, and fell heavily to the ground. It took hours before she could be restored to perfect consciousness.

A few weeks afterwards Hortense was delivered of a son. The child was dead born. Thus her last dream of happiness was gone, there was no longer any hope of a reconciliation between husband and wife.

Hortense rose from her illness with an energetic and resolute heart. During the long lonely days she had passed in bed, she had found leisure to think over many things, and to discover the intrigues that had been spun around her. She formed a right appreciation of her position. She had been a mother, and although she had not a child, the courage of a mother remained with her. The young dreaming, soft-hearted girl had suddenly become an energetic and strong-minded woman, who was no longer willing patiently to bend her neck under the yoke of misfortune, but meant to face it boldly. Her fate was sealed, nothing could alter it, but instead of being ruled by it, Hortense now resolved to make it subservient to her own will. Since she was not allowed to be happy through the heart, she meant to be happy through the mind. Since a peaceful home was refused her, her house was to be a gathering-place for science and genius. Poets

and artists, singers and sculptors, were to make it a temple of art.

Before long all Paris was talking about the salon of Madame Louis Bonaparte, the festivities that took place there, and the concerts which were given. The most distinguished operatic singers sang melodies composed by Hortense, and Talma, with his full sonorous voice, might be heard reciting the poetry she had written. Every one was ambitious to be invited to these soirées, where the performers and the audience mixed with each other, and where, instead of slandering and criticising, they enjoyed a liberal conversation, and felt with pleasure the revival of literary and scientific taste.

Hortense seemed to have reconciled herself to life, and to enjoy it. She turned from the disagreeable and repulsive things it contained, she shut her eyes against them or met them with cold contempt. She never alluded, by a single word, to the calumny with which her mother had acquainted her: she considered it as altogether beneath herself to attempt a vindication of her honour. She felt that there are accusations which are best answered by silence, which a mere reply endows with the

advantage of possibility. The charge which had been infamously hurled against her fell so short, was so far beneath her, that she would have been unable to reach it, even had she condescended to stoop.

Bonaparte, however, still felt hurt by the calumny, the more so because those insulting rumours continued to keep afloat. His enemies diligently endeavoured again and again to revive them, for they wished to disgrace the laurels Napoleon had won by accusing him of an ignominious crime.

"They still persist in spreading the rumours of a *liaison* between me and Hortense," he said one day to Bourienne; "and they have even gone so far as to throw out miserable inuendos about the legitimacy of her child. I first thought the rumour had only found an echo, because the nation wished me to have a child, but I think people still talk about an intimate acquaintance, do they not?"

"They do, General. I confess I never would have thought the calumny could find so much credit."

"It is really abominable," Napoleon replied,

with a trembling voice ; "you, Bourienne, know best whether it has any foundation or not. You see and hear everything. Nothing that passes in my house can escape your observation. You were Hortense's confidant in her love-affair with Duroc ; I therefore expect that, if you should ever write anything about me, you will cleanse me of this infamous accusation. I do not wish it to follow me to posterity. I reckon on you, Bourienne, for I know you have never believed in it?"

"Never, General!"

"Well, I count on you. Not only for my own sake, but also on behalf of poor Hortense. She is already unhappy enough, and so is my brother. I am sorry for them, for I love them both. You will remember what I have said when you are writing about me."

"I will remember it, General. I shall speak the truth, only it is unfortunately beyond my power to make everyone believe it."

Bourienne has kept his word. He has spoken the truth. He speaks with indignation of the miserable calumny with which, for a long time, Napoleon's enemies tried to brand the Emperor's and Hortense's memory. In his righteous

anger he even forgets the moderate and polite language of the diplomatist, which otherwise he uses without exception.

"It is an abominable falschood," Bourienne writes, "to assert that Bonaparte had other feelings for Hortense than those of a father. Hortense felt a respectful awe for him. She never spoke to the first consul without trembling, she never dared to ask him for anything. She would address herself to me, and I was obliged to ask for what she wanted, and it was not until I met with a refusal that I mentioned the name of the petitioner.

"'The stupid little thing!' the first consul would reply, 'why does she not speak for herself?' Napoleon always felt for her as a father, and, from the first day of her marriage, he loved her as he would have loved his own child. I, who for years have been the constant witness of his actions and his private life, solemnly declare that I never saw or heard anything that could justify the suspicion of a criminal intimacy. This calumny is one of those which are begotten by envy towards a man, who by his own merit raised himself to an exalted station, and which

are but too willingly believed by the jealous and malicious. If I had the least doubt in regard to this horrible accusation, I should openly confess it. Bonaparte is dead now. Impartial history shall not, must not, frivolously accuse the father and friend of having been a voluptuous lover. Partial and hostile writers have told the world, without having any proofs for their accusation, that a culpable intimacy existed between Bonaparte and Hortense. It is a lie, a miserable lie! And yet the calumny has for a long time found an echo, not only in France, but throughout Europe. Alas! I am afraid it is but too true that calumny exercises so powerful a spell, that if once mistress of a man she never loses hold of her victim again."

CHAPTER XIII.

KING OR EMPEROR?

JOSEPHINE'S entreaties had proved unavailing. Although, literally speaking, Napoleon had done as she wished, yet he had not taken her advice. "Do not make yourself a king," she had said. Bonaparte did not make himself a king, but he made himself Emperor. As he was unwilling to pick up the crown which had fallen from the head of the Bourbon, he shaped himself a new diadem, which was offered by the nation and the senate. The people of France still fancied they saw the phantom of Revolution standing behind

them; they feared the repetition of a reign of terror, and since the discovery of the plot of Georges, Moreau, and Pichegru, they had anxiously asked each other what would become of France if the malcontents were to succeed in taking Bonaparte's life?

The vessel of the Republic, deprived of its helmsman, would once more have been at the mercy of a tempestuous sea. The nation demanded stability and fixed institutions; a monarchical form of government only, a dynasty alone could offer this guarantee, and it became necessary that the consulate for life should be converted into a hereditary empire. Bonaparte used to say, "A man can be the Emperor of a Republic, but not its King, for the two words are too hostile to each other." It seems as if many Frenchmen flattered themselves that the Republic would continue to exist even after Napoleon had become Emperor.

On the 18th of May, 1804, the long and carefully prepared plan was carried out. On that day the senate, in a body, proceeded to St Cloud to beg Bonaparte, in the name of the nation and the army, to accept the Imperial power, and thus exchange the consular seat for a throne.

Cambacères, who until reeently had been second eonsul, stood at the head of the senate, and it was he who had to inform Bonaparte of the wishes of the French nation. Cambacères, who, when one of the members of the Convention, had voted for the exeeution of Louis the Sixteenth, in order that Royalty might be banished from Franee, was now the first who addressed Bonaparte with the title "Imperial Majesty," and the simple, but significant, word "sire." The new Emperor showed himself grateful, for the first aet of his sovereign power was the nomination of Cambacères to the post of Lord Treasurer and Lord High Chancellor. This deed of nomination was the first document whieh Bonaparte signed with the simple "Napoleon." The Emperor, however, adhered to the customary Republican style. He addressed Cambacères as "citizen eonsul," and retained the ehronology of the Revolution, for his letter bore the date, "28th Floréal of the year 12."

In a second decree, issued like the other on the first day of his Imperial power, the Emperor conferred new dignities on the members of his family. They were all made princes and prin-

cesses of France, and received the title of Imperial Highness. In addition, Napoleon's brother Joseph was nominated Elector, and Louis *Connétable.* In his new office, Louis had on the same day to introduce to the Emperor all the general officers of the army, and these officers were also presented to the "Empress Josephine."

Thus the prophecy of the negress was fulfilled: Josephine was "more than a queen." But in the midst of the splendour and glory of her new station, she remembered with a shrinking heart the words of the Parisian fortune-teller, who had said that "although she should wear a crown, yet it would only be for a little while." She felt that the fabulous good fortune she had experienced could not be enduring, and that the Emperor would be obliged to imitate the kings of antiquity, who sacrificed the best, the dearest of their possessions to conciliate the demon of envy and revenge. It was she who would fall a victim to the Emperor's ambition, and the weal of his dynasty.

Under these circumstances it was but natural that the Empress should be apprehensive and unsettled in mind. Her own greatness inspired her with terror. Trembling she entered on pos-

session of the new dignities and titles that were dealt out to her with a bountiful hand from the cornucopia of fortune. It was with something like shame and fear that she heard herself addressed by the same proud titles which in bygone years she had in these very rooms bestowed on the Queen of France. Then the Marchioness de Beauharnois paid homage to Marie Antoinette. Marie Antoinette died on a scaffold, and Josephine became the "majesty" enthroned in the Tuileries, whilst the legitimate King of France was leading a humble life in some obscure corner of England.

Josephine was still a Royalist. Even as Empress she lamented the fate of the Bourbons, and considered it a sacred duty to advise and assist those who, faithful to their oath and their principles, had followed the royal exiles, or had emigrated to escape the new order of things. Her purse was always open to the emigrants, and Josephine's considerable debts, so repeatedly incurred in spite of the enormous sums she received every month, were not altogether the work of her prodigality, but also the result of her generous liberality. One half of her income was

always reserved for assisting emigrants, and however great her embarrassment might sometimes be, however impatient her creditors, she would never suffer this sum to be touched, which was destined to misfortune and fidelity alone.

Josephine was now an Empress, and her daughter, the wife of the Connétable of France, occupied the second place at the brilliant court of the Emperor. The daughter of the beheaded Viscount de Beauharnois had become a princess of France, an "Imperial Highness," who was approached with the deepest respect only, and who had her ladies of honour. But, alas! her personal freedom and ease had been banished by a tyrannical etiquette, which the Emperor thought proper to introduce at his court.

Neither Josephine nor Hortense allowed herself to be dazzled or blinded by the splendour of her new station. Josephine's influence had not been augmented by her wearing a crown, and Hortense's proud titles were unable to enhance the charms nature had bestowed on her. She would have been happy in a modest station of life by the side of a beloved husband, but her

exalted position could not compensate her for the loss of her dearest hopes.

But fate seemed to take compassion on poor Hortense, on the lovely, innocent being who bore both her greatness and her misfortune with the same smiling dignity, for it afforded her a compensation for the destruction of her first maternal happiness, and new hopes were stirring beneath her heart.

Josephine was delighted with the news, for her daughter's hope was a hope for her. If Hortense were to give birth to a son, the impending blow might be averted from the head of the Empress, for through this son the dynasty of the Napoleons would be secured, and he might be the heir of the imperial throne. Napoleon might fairly adopt a child who was at once his nephew and grandson. He had even promised Josephine as much, had told her that he would be satisfied with an adopted son, in whose veins flowed the blood of the Emperor and the Empress, rather than separate from his beloved wife.

Napoleon still loved Josephine. Everything that seemed to him fair and beautiful he com-

pared with her, who, clothed in loveliness, stood by his side, and shed a mild, conciliatory light around his usurped greatness.

When, after he had become Emperor, Napoleon was welcomed with thundering cheers by the people, he turned to his companions, with a face beaming with satisfaction, and said, "What a delightful music this is! these acclamations sound as sweet as Josephine's voice. I am proud to be beloved by such a nation."

But Napoleon's ambition was not yet satisfied. He had formerly said, "It is not enough to be in the Tuileries, it is necessary also that a man should know how to remain there." In like manner he was now of opinion that "it was not sufficient to have been elected Emperor by the nation, but he must be anointed by the Pope."

Napoleon was sufficiently powerful already to dictate laws to the world; not only France bowed before him, but foreign sovereigns also.

Napoleon wished to be anointed by the Pope, and the head of the Church left his holy city, and came to Paris to bestow, in the cathedral of Nôtre-Dame, the blessing of the Church on the Emperor.

Thus was a new ray of glory added to Napoleon's diadem, it was a new and splendid triumph the Emperor enjoyed, a triumph over the world and its prejudices, over all its princes who reigned "by the grace of God."

The Pope come to crown the Emperor? Why, the German Emperors had been obliged humbly to proceed to Rome to receive the blessing of the holy father, but now the Pope set out on a pilgrimage to Paris to anoint the Emperor of the French, to adopt the offspring of a revolution as the eldest son of the Church!

All France was, so to say, intoxicated with joy. All France worshipped the hero, who changed fables into realities, who stood at so exalted an eminence that the holy see of Rome even became the footstool of his greatness! Napoleon's progress through France, on which Josephine accompanied him, resembled *one* triumphal procession. Everywhere the people received him with enthusiastic acclamations, the Church sang her *Sanctus! Sanctus!* and the clergy welcomed him at the portals of the churches with their blessings, saluting him as the saviour of France. Everywhere the imperial couple met

with cheers, triumphal arches, and speeches,—the latter being sometimes rather overstrained, I confess, and often very ridiculous.

When the Emperor arrived at Arras, the Prefect of that town received him with an enthusiastic address, in the course of which he said, "God created Bonaparte and then rested!" Count Louis de Narbonne, who stood close by, and who at that time had not yet been gained over to the party of the Emperor, or appointed Grand-Marshal of the Imperial Court, said, pretty distinctly, "God would have done better had He rested a little sooner."

At last all France was electrified by the intelligence that the incredible, that what no one had dared to believe, had come to pass, that Pope Pius VII. had crossed the frontiers of France, and was approaching the capital. The holy father was everywhere received with the greatest distinction. The Church emerged victoriously from amongst the ruins beneath which the Revolution had buried it for a while. The old royal castle of Fontainebleau had, by order of the Emperor, been fitted up to receive the Pope. They had the tasteful consideration to furnish the bed-room

after the model of that of the holy father in the Quirinal at Rome. The Emperor and Josephine therefore proceeded to Fontainebleau to welcome Pius VII.

The ceremonial of the reception had been settled beforehand; and all the points of etiquette had been taken into consideration. It had been agreed upon that on the couriers bringing intelligence of the Pope's approach, the Emperor should go out hunting, and meet the holy father, as if by accident on the road. The imperial carriages and the court had been ordered to the forest of Nemours. Napoleon, in a hunting-dress, followed by a few only of his attendants, rode up a little hill, and at the same moment the carriage of the Pope reached its summit. The holy father ordered his servants to stop, and the Emperor, with a movement of his hand, commanded his followers to remain behind. There was a deep, solemn silence. Every one of the by-standers was conscious that an important scene of history was being played at this moment. They all looked in mute expectation on the two principal actors,—on the Emperor, who in a simple hunting dress was sitting on his charger, and on the Pope

who reclined in his glittering carriage drawn by six horses.

When Napoleon had dismounted, the Pope hastened to leave his carriage; when on the point of putting his foot on the ground he hesitated for a moment; but there was no time to be lost, Napoleon was already on foot, and Pius stepped out of his carriage, although his gold-embroidered slippers of white satin were ill adapted for the mud of the road, which had been considerably softened by previous rain. The Emperor's hunting-boots were doubtlessly much fitter for a meeting on the highway than his Holiness's slippers.

The Emperor and the Pope approached and embraced each other. But all at once the horses of an imperial carriage, as if by some neglect on the part of the driver, sprang forward and separated the affectionate couple. It seemed to happen accidentally too that Napoleon stood on the right side of the carriage, whilst the Pope was on the other side of the road. At this moment both doors of the imperial equipage were thrown open by the footmen, and Napoleon and Pius VII. entered it simultaneously. They sat side by side, the Emperor in the place of honour, the Pope on his

left. Thus the observanees of etiquette had been satisfied, and neither of them had had the precedence.

On the 2nd of Deeember, 1804, the solemn coronation of the Imperial couple took plaee in Nôtre Dame. Not merely all Paris, but all France was astir on that day. There was a tremendous crowd thronging the streets of the eapital, every window was oeeupied by riehly-dressed ladies, the bells were ringing joyous peals, and the sound of martial music mingled with the thunder of the artillery and the loud cheers of the multitude.

For an instant, however, the enthusiastic cheers of the people gave plaee to a hearty laugh. It was at the moment when the approaching Papal procession was seen to open (aeeording to an old Roman eustom) with a she-ass. Whilst the Pope, aeeompanied by the high dignitaries of the Cathedral, went to the Cathedral, there to await the arrival of the Imperial couple, Napoleon was ornamenting himself with the emblems of sovereign power. He wore a green velvet mantle, studded with diamonds and golden bees, and embroidered with ermine.

When about to leave the Tuileries, and after the Empress, already fully dressed, had joined him, Napoleon suddenly ordered that the solicitor, Ragideau, should be fetched without a moment's delay. Messengers were immediately despatched, a court carriage accompanied them, and within a quarter of an hour Monsieur Ragideau stood before the Emperor.

"I have sent for you, sir," Napoleon addressed him, "because I was desirous to ask you whether General Bonaparte really does not possess anything besides his sword and his cloak, or if to-day you will forgive the Viscountess de Beauharnois for having married me?"

Ragideau looked astonished, and Josephine asked what was meant by these mysterious words. Napoleon now told them how in the ante-room of the notary he had overheard their conversation, and what Ragideau said to dissuade Josephine from marrying the General who "possessed nothing save his cloak and his sword."

The solicitor's words had then entered Napoleon's ambitious heart, like the blade of a dagger, and deeply wounded it. He had never mentioned the circumstance, although he had never forgotten

it. At the moment when he arrived at the height of human greatness, he allowed himself the triumph of reminding the little lawyer how he advised Josephine not to marry him on account of his poverty.

The poor General Bonaparte had become a powerful Emperor. Formerly he had nothing but his sword and his cloak, to-day the Pope was waiting for him at Nôtre Dame to place a crown upon his head.

CHAPTER XIV.

NAPOLEON'S HEIR.

HORTENSE had not been able to perform an active part in the festivities that took place on the occasion of the Emperor's coronation. However, she had her share of the general happiness, for she had given birth to a son. The sight of the child inspired the young mother with new hope and energy.

Josephine, who only accepted the Imperial diadem reluctantly, received the news of her grandson's birth with the greatest joy. She thought that the clouds, which for some time had been gathering over her head, were now dispelled,

that the sun of her good fortune was again shining with undiminished splendour. Hortense, by giving birth to a son, had secured her mother's future; for now that the Emperor was no longer without an heir to his newly-founded dynasty, a divorce would not be necessary.

Napoleon seemed willing to realize Josephine's hopes, and evinced an inclination to adopt his brother's son. He begged the Pope to delay his departure for a few days, in order to baptize the child. The vicar of Christ complied with the Emperor's wishes, and the baptism took place at St Cloud. Napoleon himself held the little prince over the font, while Madame Lætitia Bonaparte was the other witness.

Thus Hortense had at last found a being whom she might love with all the passionate affection which hitherto she had been obliged to conceal within her bosom. Little Napoleon Charles was the first happy love of Hortense, and she enjoyed it freely and with all her soul.

Henceforth her house was her favourite resort, and she valued it doubly now, because she was no longer obliged to share it with her husband. She considered it a favour of Heaven not to be

compelled to give up to him any part of the love she bore her child. Louis Bonaparte, the Connétable of France, had been appointed governor of Piedmont, and Hortense was indebted to her bad health for the permission to remain behind. She did not accompany her husband to Italy, but stayed at her *hôtel* in Paris, which, at the beginning of summer, she exchanged for the castle of St Leu, which had lately been purchased by her husband.

But Hortense was not allowed to enjoy her solitude and healthy rustic life for a lengthened period. The Emperor's brother and the lady who at once was Napoleon's sister-in-law and daughter, could not hope to be suffered to live in obscurity. They were rays of the sun that dazzled the eyes of the world, they had to fulfil their destination, and must enhance the brilliancy of that sun.

An order of Napoleon's recalled to Paris the Connétable, who had returned from Piedmont, and hastened to St Leu to see his son, and Hortense was commanded to join him. The Emperor had prepared a brilliant lot for his brother, and the Connétable was about to become a king.

Envoys from Holland, which state was now called the Batavian Republic, had arrived in Paris to ask their powerful neighbour, the Emperor Napoleon, to give them a king, who might unite their country to France by the ties of relationship. Napoleon was willing to comply with their wishes, and his youngest brother was selected as their sovereign.

But Louis heard of the proposal with terror, and refused to accept the honour that frightened him instead of dazzling his eyes. And for once he acted in harmony with Hortense, who strongly urged him to persist in his refusal. They both felt that the crown which was to be placed on their heads would be nothing but a golden burden, that Holland would not be suffered to be anything else but a dependency of France. And besides, personal reasons might be added to these political motives for declining the crown of Holland.

In Paris both husband and wife might forget the fetters that chained them to each other, for there they were in the midst of their friends and relations. They could avoid meeting. The numerous court and large family of the Emperor

stood between the two young people, who could never forgive each other having consented to their marriage. In Paris they had society, had all sorts of amusements and diversions, but in Holland they would be left to themselves, and would always hear the rattling of their odious chains. Could they but stay in Paris, they might continue the pilgrimage of life without open hostility, but the quiet life of Holland, by compelling them to live together, must inevitably transform them into actual enemies.

They were both aware of this, and therefore united their efforts in trying to avert the new misfortune which was hovering over their heads in the shape of a crown.

But, alas! whence could they derive the power successfully to resist the will of the Emperor? Hortense had never dared address herself directly to Napoleon, and Josephine had already begun to feel that her wishes and entreaties no longer possessed their former influence over the Emperor. She therefore carefully avoided asking him for anything, unless she had the certainty of being successful in her demand.

Louis, however, had sufficient courage to attempt opposition. He openly told his brother that he felt no inclination to accept the proffered crown. But Napoleon's glance of anger prostrated Louis' resolution, and he silently obeyed.

In the presence of the deputies of the Batavian Republic, who had come to ask for a sovereign, Napoleon called on his brother Louis to accept the crown of Holland, and exhorted him to be a good king to his country, and to respect and protect the laws and religion of his subjects.

Louis, in a voice that faltered with emotion, declared his willingness to accept the crown, and then took an oath faithfully to fulfil his duties as a sovereign.

From this moment it was his earnest and constant endeavour to prove himself faithful to that oath. He devoted all his energies and talents to the conscientious discharge of his duty. As the Dutch had chosen him for their king, he wished to show them that he was not unworthy of their confidence. As he had been forced to leave his native country, and to cease being a Frenchman, he meant to direct all his

thoughts towards his new fatherland, and to become a thorough Dutchman.

The weak and sickly scholar exhibited an energy and activity of which no one could have thought him capable; the contemplative, reserved brother of Napoleon had suddenly been changed into a man, who was conscious of his own dignity, who had set himself a great task, and meant to accomplish it through his own unaided efforts.

The King of Holland considered it of primary importance to be liked by his subjects. He therefore neglected nothing which could gain him the hearts of the Dutch nation. He studied their language and manners with indefatigable perseverance, and endeavoured to discover the sources whence the wealth or misery of nations springs, in order that he might be able to enlarge the former, whilst stopping the latter.

He was always at work, and constantly exerted himself in order to gain the affection and esteem of his subjects.

Hortense also endeavoured to fill her new sphere properly; as she too was compelled to wear a crown, she wished to wear it with dignity. In

her drawing-room she assembled the old aristocracy and young nobility of Holland, and taught the stiff and prejudiced society of that country the easy grace and fine tact of the French salons. The arts and sciences made their appearance with Hortense, and were introduced by her into the houses of the high aristocracy of Holland, to which they imparted new lustre and life.

But Hortense was not only a protectress of art and science, she was also the benefactress of the poor, and an angel of consolation to misery. She dried the tears and alleviated the sufferings of many. Both the king and the queen were adored by the nation; both understood how to spread happiness around them, but they were unable to find it for themselves. They were kind and yielding to others, but they treated each other with anger and obstinacy. Nothing, not even the birth of a second and a third son, was capable of filling up the gulf that lay between them.

This gulf was destined to be made wider still by another blow dealt to them by ruthless fate. The eldest of Hortense's sons, the adopted child and heir presumptive of Napoleon, with whom the Emperor had been seen playing for hours

together on the terrace at St Cloud, and whose birth had first made Hortense acquainted with the blissful feelings of a mother—little Napoleon Charles suddenly died of the measles.

This was a dreadful blow, a blow that prostrated not only the parents, but the Imperial couple of France as well. When the sad intelligence reached the Emperor he wept, and Josephine exclaimed in agony:

"Now I am lost! my fate is decided, he will forsake me."

But after this first selfish outbreak of her grief she thought of her poor daughter, and hastened to the Hague to weep with her, and remove her from the scene of her misfortune.

Hortense, in mute despair, followed her mother to St Cloud, while her husband, whose health was much shaken by the death of the child, went to the watering-places of the Pyrenées. The royal castle at the Hague was once more deserted; death had banished mirth and joy from it, and although the king and queen did after some time return to it, peace and happiness remained absent for ever.

King Louis was gloomier than before, after

his return from the Pyrenées. An unnatural distrust of everything and everybody, an odious irritability, had taken possession of his whole person, and his wife was no longer willing to put up with his capriciousness and ill-temper. As husband and wife were totally unlike each other in their wishes, opinions, and inclinations, their children, far from being the means of conciliation, were but the sources of discord; for each of the parents wished to possess them exclusively, and educate them according to his or her views.

Unhappy as Hortense was, there was another misfortune that made her forget her own wretchedness, because it seemed greater than hers, as it crushed the happiness of her mother. Josephine, in a letter which was nothing but a deep wail of agony, summoned her daughter to her side, and Hortense, without delay, set out for Paris.

CHAPTER XV.

PRESENTIMENTS.

Josephine's evil forebodings, and the words of the fortune-teller, were now about to be fulfilled. The crown which she had accepted with so much reluctance, but which, after once having received it, she had worn with so much affability and grace, so much dignity and ease, was about to fall from her head. Napoleon had the courageous cruelty, now that he was great, to forsake the woman who had loved and chosen him, when he possessed nothing but doubtful prospects. Josephine, who had shared his poverty, his dangers,

and humiliations, was now to be banished from his side, was to experience the miserable hopelessness of a widow.

Napoleon had courage sufficient to determine this, but he shrunk from telling Josephine himself what he intended. He was about to sacrifice to his ambition the woman whom he had often called his "guardian angel," but he, who had never trembled on the field of battle where death surrounded him, trembled at the thought of witnessing her tears, and avoided meeting her reproachful eye.

Josephine, however, was conscious of the whole greatness of the danger that threatened her. She read it in the gloomy, downcast look of the Emperor (who, since his return from Vienna, had ordered the communication between his rooms and those of the Empress to be closed, without informing her of the fact); she read it in the faces of the courtiers, who began to approach her with less humility, and to substitute for the respect of former days a sort of good-natured compassion; she heard it in the whisper that died away as soon as she approached a distant group in her drawing room, and in the hints

which were thrown out by the journals, which all attached great political importance to the Emperor's visit to Vienna.

Josephine knew that her destiny was about to be fulfilled. She felt that she was too weak to offer any effectual resistance, but she was determined to play her part as woman and empress to the very last with becoming dignity. She displayed no tears, for they were all wept in the stillness of night. She concealed her sigh under a smile, and hid the paleness of her cheek under the rosy hue of paint. But she longed for a sympathetic heart to whom she might speak of her grief and reveal her agony. This was the reason why she called Hortense to Paris.

The meeting of mother and daughter was a sad one. Many a tear was shed, and Hortense's ear heard many a tale of woe.

"Oh, if you knew," said Josephine, "what I have suffered during these last weeks, when I had ceased to be his wife and still had to appear as such! What looks, Hortense, what looks are those which courtiers bestow upon a deserted wife! In what uncertainty, what continual fear have I lived, expecting every moment that the

destroying flash, which has for a long time glowed in Napoleon's eye, should descend on my head!"

Hortense heard her mother's complaints in silence, but she felt her own heart contracted by bitterness and grief. She remembered how she had been obliged to sacrifice her happiness to that of her mother; how she had been condemned to marry without love, in order that the grandeur of Josephine might be secured; and see! the sacrifice had been in vain, and it had not availed to avert her mother's fate. Here Josephine stood, awaiting the blow that was to prostrate her, and Hortense could do nothing to parry it. She was a queen, and yet she was a helpless, unhappy woman, who envied the beggar in the street her freedom and the humbleness of her lot. Both mother and daughter stood on the topmost round of the ladder of human greatness, and yet this empress and this queen both felt so wretched and lonely, that they looked back with regret to the days of the Revolution, to the time when, in poverty and want, they had led a humble and obscure life. Then, although poor, they had been rich in hopes and wishes, while, now that they

possessed everything brilliant that life is capable of offering, now that millions bowed before them and honoured them with the proud title of "Majesty," they had nothing to hope for, nothing to look for; all the sweet illusions and dreams of former days had faded away, and there was nothing left but the cold, stern reality.

But, no! one consolation remained; they had one thing left they might enjoy,—they were allowed to weep in each other's arms.

A few days after her arrival Hortense was summoned to the Emperor's study. Napoleon rose with great animation, but as he met Hortense's eyes, which were red with weeping, he hesitated.

"Hortense," he said at last, "we are on the eve of a great sacrifice, from which I must not shrink. France has done so much for me and my family, that I am in duty bound to comply with what she wishes. The peace and welfare of this country demand that I should choose a wife who may give the nation an heir to the throne. For six months Josephine has been living in fear and uncertainty, and this must end. You, Hortense, are her dearest friend, her confidante, you

she loves more than any one else in this world. Will you undertake to prepare your mother for the fate that awaits her? By complying with my wishes you would remove a heavy burden from my heart."

Hortense had sufficient strength of mind to repress her tears, and to look fixedly on the face of the Emperor. Again he involuntarily fell back a step, and his eye sought the ground, just as the lion retires before the flashing, angry glance of a pure and innocent maiden.

Hortense had the courage to refuse compliance with the Emperor's wishes.

"What! Hortense!" Napoleon said in a sorrowful voice, "do you refuse to fulfil my request?"

"Sire," she replied, hardly able to repress her tears any longer, "I have not the strength to bury the dagger in my mother's breast." And, disregarding all etiquette, Hortense turned round and quitted the room.

Napoleon made one more attempt to apprize Josephine of her fate through a third person. He begged Eugène, the viceroy of Italy, to come to Paris, and acquainted him with his intentions and

his wishes. Eugène, like Hortense, heard the Emperor's resolution with silent sorrow, but he too declared his unwillingness to be the bearer of a message that must destroy the happiness of his mother. The Emperor was consequently compelled to deliver the mournful message himself.

It was on the 30th of November, 1809. The Emperor, as usual, took his dinner with the Empress. The gloomy look with which he entered the room made Josephine's heart quake. She read on his features that the moment of decision had arrived. But she repressed her tears; she only cast an imploring glance at Hortense, who, pale and downcast, sat on the opposite side of the table.

Not a word was spoken during that melancholy dinner. The oppressive, convulsive sighs that rose in the breast of the Empress could be distinctly heard. Outside, the wind howled and groaned, and drove the rain fiercely against the clattering windows. In the dining-room there reigned a deep, unbroken silence. The fierce contest of the elements without contrasted strangely with the silence within. Once only was the monotony of the dinner interrupted. It

was when Napoleon asked one of the servants in a harsh voice what time it was. Then all was silent again.

At last Napoleon rose. He took his coffee standing. He emptied the cup hastily, and as he put it aside his hands trembled and made the vessel clatter. Then, with an abrupt movement of the hand, he ordered all present to retire.

"Sire," Josephine asked in a voice that was scarcely audible, "may Hortense stay with me?"

"No!" the Emperor replied, impatiently. Hortense bowed respectfully, and giving a compassionate glance to her mother, left the room. All the court followed her.

The Emperor and the Empress were left by themselves. They were both silent. What a terrible silence it was! How sadly they stood opposite each other! What a melancholy look that was the Emperor cast on his wife! She saw in his convulsively agitated features what an awful struggle was going on in his breast, and knew she was about to fall.

At length he approached her. He stretched forth his hand. It trembled. Josephine felt as

if about to be suffocated, and a feverish heat coursed through her veins.

Napoleon took her hand and placed it on his heart. She offered no resistance, but a groan of agony escaped her as he did so. Napoleon, with a mournful but steady glance, looked her full in the face.

"Josephine," he said in a voice that trembled with emotion, "my dear Josephine, you know that I love you. To you alone I am indebted for the few moments of happiness that have fallen to my lot. But fate is stronger than my will. My dearest inclinations must yield to the interests of France."

"Say no more!" Josephine said, angrily withdrawing her hand from his grasp. "Say no more! I understand you and expected it. But the blow is not the less deadly for that reason!"

She could speak no more. Her voice failed her, for she was overcome by utter despair. The storm that had been spell-bound so long, had broken loose and now raged with the utmost violence.

She wept, she wrung her hands, and would have cried out in the bitterness of her agony, had not the voice failed her. At last a deep

swoon took compassion upon her, and freed her from the consciousness of her misery.

When she awoke she found herself in bed. Hortense and the court physician stood by her side. Josephine stretched her arms towards her daughter, who, passionately weeping, sank on the bosom of her mother. Corvisart retired, for he knew that he could afford no further assistance. He had been able to recall Josephine to the consciousness of her wretchedness; but it was beyond his power to remove the cause of her misery. The sympathy and tears of Hortense were the only balsam the Empress had to soothe the pain of her heart.

Josephine wept long and abundantly in her daughter's arms, but when Napoleon came to inquire after the state of her health—when he sat down at her bed-side—she shrunk from him, her tears ceased to flow, and those eyes, which had always been accustomed to look kindly on him, were animated by a flash of anger and contempt. But love soon vanquished her anger. She stretched out her feverish hand to the Emperor, and her lips bore the angelic smile of a forgiving woman as she said :

"Well, my friend, was I not right in shrinking from becoming an empress?"

Napoleon made no reply. He turned away and wept. But these valedictory tears of his love could no longer influence the fate of the unfortunate Josephine. It had for some time been irrevocably fixed by the Emperor. Napoleon had already received at Vienna the consent to a marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise, the daughter of the Emperor of Austria. Nothing remained to be done but to remove Josephine, in order that a legitimate empress might take possession of her throne.

The Emperor would not, could not, alter his resolution. He assembled around him all his brothers, all the kings, dukes, and princes who had been created by his potent will, and before the Imperial family, the court, and the senate, who were all assembled in the Tuileries, he declared, with a firm voice, his intention to separate from his wife. Josephine, who for the last time appeared in the Imperial robes, stood by the side of Napoleon and repeated his words. Her speech was broken and interrupted by frequent sobs.

The Lord High Chancellor Cambacères then

ordered one of the secretaries of state, present on the occasion, to read out the law of the *code civile* treating on divorce, spoke a few words about its being applicable to the present case, and declared the union of the Emperor with the Empress dissolved.

Thus the ceremony was finished, the demands of the law had been satisfied, and Josephine had now to bid farewell to her husband and the court. She did so with an angelic kindness, with that sweet, heart-winning smile which she could command better than almost any other woman. Pale, but apparently composed, she bowed to Napoleon; the Emperor spoke some hurried, indistinct words, and an expression of agonizing pain flashed across his features. At the moment when, led by her two children, she left the room, nodding a last farewell to all assembled, sobbing and weeping could be heard on all sides. Her enemies, even those who rejoiced in her fall, because they hoped to derive advantage from the new marriage, felt moved as they beheld this melancholy scene. There were very few present whose eyes were not bedimmed with tears.

The victim had been offered up. Napoleon

had sacrificed to his ambition what, next to his ambition, he loved best on earth. He was separated from Josephine.

On the same day Josephine left the Tuileries to retire to Malmaison, and live in the mansion which had once been the Paradise, but was now the purgatory, of her love.

Josephine left the court, but the hearts of its members continued devoted to her. During the first few weeks of her retirement the road from Paris to Malmaison was literally covered with the carriages of all the kings and princes, all the dignitaries and noblemen, who were at Paris. There was an uninterrupted procession between the capital and the residence of the ex-Empress. Even the Faubourg St Germain, which still preserved its sympathies for the Bourbons, and had its secret representatives in Paris, went to Malmaison. And it was not only the rich and exalted who condoled Josephine, for the poor and lowly did so as well. Every one, no matter whether poor or rich, high or low, was desirous of showing the ex-Empress how much she was still beloved and revered, and she continued to

reign over the hearts of her people, although she had ceased to sit on a throne.

The whole French nation mourned with Josephine and her children. There was a general belief that the Emperor's star was about to set, that with Josephine his good genius had deserted him, and that fate would not fail to avenge the tears of the deserted Empress.

Metternich, who believed that the alliance of Austria and France would be beneficial to the interests of the former country, and enable him to settle the Eastern question satisfactorily and in defiance of Russia, suggested that the Archduchess Marie Louise should be given in marriage to the victorious soldier of France.

When Lord Castlereagh heard of the marriage, he said with a smile, "A virgin must now and then be sacrificed to the Minotaur." The Viennese formed even a more malicious judgment about this act of desperation on the part of their Emperor. They said of Napoleon, "Now it is all up with him, now we have him, for he has been vaccinated with the Austrian misfortune and Austrian stupidity." To a certain extent this simple

prophecy was correct. The alliance with Austria became Napoleon's misfortune, in so far as it led him into further errors as to the greatness of his power.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE KING OF HOLLAND.

While Josephine lamented the dissolution of her marriage, Hortense wished and prayed that her unhappy union with Louis Bonaparte might come to a similar solution. Hortense, although still living with her husband, had never felt any attachment for him. She now again besought the Emperor, as did her husband, to sanction a divorce.

But Napoleon was inexorable. His family was not to set the country the bad example of disregarding the sanctity of matrimony. His

own divorce had been dictated by political considerations, and equally through political considerations he was unwilling that his brother should dissolve his marriage.

Thus the unfortunate couple were compelled to continue dragging their chains. They both did it with revolting hearts; and since they had no one they could reproach for their misfortune, they reproached each other and grew more and more hostile.

Louis returned to Holland, more gloomy than ever. Hortense, with her two sons, stayed for some time longer at Paris. Napoleon had ordered her to do so, for she was to be present at his marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise, which was soon to take place. The daughter of the divorced Empress, together with the sisters of the Emperor, was destined to bear the train of the new Empress on her wedding-day. Napoleon meant to prove to the world that his relations knew no other law but his will, and that the daughter of Josephine had never ceased to be his obedient child. Besides, Napoleon wished to attach the Queen, who had inherited the grace and loveliness of Josephine, to the person of his young

wife. She would be a model to all the court, and an amiable and considerate mentor to the Empress.

Hortense silently obeyed Napoleon. On the 1st of April, 1810, the day on which the Archduchess Marie Louise became Empress of France, she bore her train, together with the Emperor's sisters. She alone did so without opposition, for Napoleon's sisters, Queen Caroline of Naples, the Duchess of Guastalla, and Eliza, Grand-duchess of Tuscany, strongly protested before they obeyed their brother's command, and followed the new Empress with an angry flush on their cheek, and tears in their eyes.

There were other persons, besides the Emperor's sisters, who felt dissatisfied on Napoleon's wedding-day. They were the majority of the high clergy. But few of the dignitaries of the Church had followed the invitation of the master of ceremonies, who had orders to ask them to be present at the marriage of the Imperial couple, which took place in the chapel of the Tuileries.

Napoleon could not punish his sisters on account of their tears, but he chastised the dis-

obedience of the Cardinals, who had not made their appearance in the chapel. The next morning they were all banished from the capital, and forbidden to wear the purple robe appertaining to their rank. They were obliged to adopt the black dress of penitents.

The Parisians too were dissatisfied with the Emperor's choice. They received Marie Louise with an artificial enthusiasm. They looked upon the Austrian as being ominous to France. When, soon after the Emperor's marriage, at a ball given by Prince Metternich in honour of the alliance, that terrible conflagration took place which destroyed so many human lives, the mob were inclined to ascribe it to the presence of the new Empress. They remembered the sad accident during Marie Antoinette's entry into Paris, and called the fire the precursor of the misfortunes which the "Austrian" would bring upon France and her Emperor.

Whilst Hortense attended the festivities at the Imperial court, a storm was gathering over the head of her husband, which was soon to threaten both his life and his crown.

When Louis, obedient to the Emperor's will,

accepted the crown of the Netherlands, he solemnly vowed to himself to be a faithful sovereign to his people, and to devote all his energies to the welfare of Holland. He was too honest a man not to fulfil this oath. He only thought of adopting such measures and issuing such edicts as might serve to make the country thrive, and in doing so never cared whether the path he pursued crossed the interests of France. He was unwilling to look upon Holland as a province of France, for he thought he was more than a viceroy of the Emperor. He considered the Netherlands a free country, and himself a free king. But Napoleon did not at all look at matters in this light, and it appeared to him an unheard-of sacrilege that Holland wished to deny the supremacy of France.

When the Emperor invested his brother with the crown of Holland, he exhorted him to be a good king to his people, but never to cease being a Frenchman, and to consult the interests of France in his policy. Louis, however, had striven to become a thorough Dutchman, and therefore, when the interests of the two countries became hostile, he did not hesitate for one

moment to side with the nation whose king he was, and to think and act as a Dutchman. He was of opinion that Holland owed her wealth to nothing but her commerce, and that she could only be great by her mercantile importance. Consequently he reduced the army and navy, changed the men-of-war into merchant vessels, and converted the marines into peaceful sailors.

Napoleon, however, regarded these proceedings with dismay, and severely blamed the king for disarming whole fleets and disbanding the army. "Holland," he said, "was in a defenceless state, for merchants and shopkeepers were incapable of consolidating a power." A still greater crime was the re-opening of commercial intercourse with England. Holland disregarded the blockade Napoleon had proclaimed against Great Britain, and the American flag, which was banished from all French ports, fluttered safely in the harbours of Holland.

The Emperor demanded of King Louis that he should consult nothing but the interests of France. He insisted that Holland should break off all commercial intercourse with England, equip a fleet of forty line-of-battle ships, seven

frigates, and seven brigs, and raise the army to 25,000 men. In addition, all the privileges of the nobility, that were contrary to the constitution, were to be abolished.

King Louis had courage enough to refuse, in the name of Holland, compliance with these demands. He disregarded the orders of the Emperor, in a case where execution could only destroy the prosperity of Holland.

Napoleon answered this refusal by a declaration of war. The Dutch ambassador at Paris received his passports, and a French *corps d'armée* began moving towards the Netherlands to chastise the obstinacy of the king.

However, the misfortune by which Holland was threatened had roused all Louis's energy. Threats and angry letters seemed unable to curb the will of the king. At last the Duke of Reggio, the commander-in-chief of the army of invasion, approached Amsterdam, to force the king, by a siege of that important town, into compliance with the Emperor's wishes. Louis, seeing that further resistance was useless, but determined not to depart from his line of conduct, resolved upon descending from the throne.

In a proclamation addressed to his people, he told them that, "feeling convinced he was unable to do the cause of Holland any further good, but, on the contrary, considering himself an obstacle to a reconciliation with France, he had resolved upon abdicating in favour of his two sons, Napoleon Louis, and Charles Louis Napoleon." Until their majority, their mother, agreeably to the Constitution, was to stand at the head of the regency. After having thus settled the question of succession, he addressed a few touching farewell words to his subjects, and then left the country *incognito*, and under the name of the Count de St Leu. Passing through the dominions of his brother Jérôme, the King of Westphalia, and through Saxony, he went to Töplitz, where he stopped to drink the waters.

It was here that he first heard how Napoleon, far from being willing to acknowledge his abdication, had incorporated Holland with the empire of France. Louis published a protest against his brother's proceedings, and called the Emperor's measure an act of violence, which nothing could justify. In the name of his son, Napoleon Louis, he demanded the restoration of Holland, its an-

nexation to France being contrary to the sacred law of nations, and declared the incorporation of the Netherlands void.

Napoleon replied to the king's protest, by commanding the French ambassador at Vienna to tell Louis to return to France before the 1st of December, 1810, and a non-compliance with this order would be regarded in the light of high treason. The king was to be considered a rebel against the constitution of France and the head of his family, and treated accordingly.

Louis took no notice of this summons. He retired to Grätz in Styria, and lived there as a private gentleman. He was beloved and admired, not only by those who were near his person, but almost by the whole of Europe. People could not help feeling esteem for a king who had so nobly sacrificed his own greatness to the welfare of his people. His enemies even, and those of his family, could not but acknowledge that he had acted magnanimously, and Louis XVIII. said, in speaking of him, "Louis Bonaparte has become a real king by his abdication. By laying down his crown he has shown himself worthy of wearing it. He is the first monarch who has

offered up such a sacrifice, actuated by love of his country only. Others have resigned the purple before him, but they did it because they were tired of power. In the King of Holland's way of acting there is something which has not as yet been rightly appreciated, but which, if I am not very much mistaken, will command the admiration of posterity."

At Grätz Louis Bonaparte spent, as Count de St Leu, a few peaceful and quiet years. They were the first and perhaps the only years of happiness he had enjoyed amid the storms and disappointments of a tempestuous life. His days were spent in study and meditation, and he did not at all seem to regret the loss of his exalted station. As he had formerly endeavoured to be a good king, now it was his ambition to become a distinguished author. He published a novel, which bore the title of "Marie," and, encouraged by the success it met with amongst his friends, he had some of his poetry printed as well. The deep, passionate feeling that characterized his verses proved that his heart, so often misunderstood, and thence shy, wounded, and suspicious, was nevertheless capable of a pure, disinterested love.

Maria Pascal, the beautiful and accomplished harp-player, is thought not to have resisted it.

But the day came when Louis Bonaparte closed his ear against the sweet voice of peace and love, and listened to duty only, which commanded him to return to France and to the side of his brother. So long as the sun of success shone brightly over Napoleon, the ex-king of Holland, who had voluntarily descended from his throne, remained distant and in obscurity, but no sooner did misfortune break in over the Emperor than he returned to him. In the hour of danger there was but one place for Napoleon's brave and faithful brother—it was that by the side of the Emperor.

"On the day when Austria so unexpectedly broke her alliance with France," says Madame de St Elme, who was at Grätz at the time, and witnessed the farewell scene that took place between Louis Bonaparte and the inhabitants of that town, "King Louis felt the necessity of leaving an asylum, for which henceforth he could only have been indebted to the enemies of France. He hastened to demand from his great but unjust brother the only place that was worthy of the

dignity of his character, a place by the Emperor's side.

"But what a source of regret was his departure to the inhabitants of Grätz, indeed of all Styria. For there was no pious or charitable foundation in the country that had not received help from his hands. And yet it was well known that the means of the monarch who had descended from the throne so hurriedly and unprepared were but slender, and that he denied himself many a pleasure in order to assist others. They begged, they besought him not to go from amongst them. When they saw him persist in his resolution, when the horses, which at first had been withheld, were brought at last to bear him away, the people of Grätz unharnessed them, and themselves drew the carriage as far as the gate of the town. His voluntary departure resembled a triumphal march. The banished, homeless king left his exile amongst sincere demonstrations of love, such as had hardly been shown on the occasion of his ascension to the throne."

CHAPTER XVII.

JUNOT, DUC D'ABRANTÉS.

While all his faithful friends hurried up to collect round Napoleon, and offer the hero, threatened by Fate and man, their help and support—while even his brother Louis, forgetting all insults and humiliations, hastened to him, one of his most honest and devoted friends, one on whom the Emperor might have reckoned in need and in death, was kept far from him by destiny.

This one was the friend of his youth, and comrade in arms, Junot, who, issuing from a poor family, had raised himself by his heroic courage

and merits to the rank of a Duc d'Abrantés. He alone remained behind when the trumpets of war summoned all Napoleon's generals, with their ill-omened clang, to Paris. But he remained away, not because he wished it, but because his destiny decreed it.

Junot, the hero of so many battles, the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, the former Governor of Madrid, the present Governor of Istria and Illyria, was afflicted by the worst and most awful of diseases,—his brain was sick! The scars that covered his head and brow, and afforded such noble testimony of his bravery, at the same time revealed the source of his sufferings; his head, so frequently assailed by sabre strokes, might be externally cured, but the wounds had left their mental mark behind.

The hero of so many actions had changed into a poor lunatic. And yet this lunatic was still the omnipotent and unchecked ruler of Istria and Illyria. Napoleon, on appointing him for the second time Governor of these provinces, had invested him with truly regal authority. As he knew the noble temper, fidelity, and devotion of his brother-in-arms, he endowed him with the attributes of

a despotic sovereign, and allowed him to govern in his stead. Hence, no one had the power to deprive the madman of his authority, or wrest the sceptre from his grasp. Napoleon had placed it in his hand, and he alone could demand its return. Even the Viceroy of Italy, to whom the estates of Istria applied for help in their terror and despair, even Eugène was unable to assist them; he could only say to them, "Send a courier to the Emperor, and await his reply."

But at that day it was not such an easy matter to send couriers a distance of a thousand miles: at that day there were no railways, no telegraphs, and the power of electricity and magnetism had not yet been rendered slaves of the human will. The Illyrians at once sent off a courier to the Emperor, to demand an alleviation of their sufferings; but the Russian proverb, "The sky is high and the Emperor far away," was applicable to them. Weeks must elapse ere the courier would return with the Emperor's answer, and until then there was no help, and they had no other orders to obey but those of the Duc d'Abrantés, the poor maniac.

No power, no institution, had the right to

place itself in his stead, or to invest itself for a moment with his omnipotence, without insulting the authority with which a Napoleon had invested the governor of his own choosing.

Napoleon, whose crown was already beginning to tremble on his head, and who was already so near his downfall, still possessed such a gigantic might, that its reflection sufficed to cover, at a distance of a thousand miles from the French frontier, the irresponsible actions of a man who had lost his senses and the mastery of his judgment and will.

How handsome, how amiable, and chivalrous had Junot been in his earlier days; how gloriously had he enchanted the pretty women in the salons and the soldiers on the battle-field! In all chivalrous arts he had been the master, everywhere and ever the undoubted victor and hero. As such he had won the heart of Mademoiselle de Permont; and, in spite of her mother's horror, the daughter of the haughty Baroness of the Faubourg St Germain had willingly resolved on becoming the wife of the soldier of the Republic, the brother-in-arms of Napoleon. Although Junot possessed no other fortune but his pay, no other

nobility than his sword and his renown, these sufficed to win the heart of the daughter of a stern legitimist mother, however proud that daughter might be of calling herself the last descendant of the Comneni.

Napoleon, who was very fond of seeing his generals and young nobility ally themselves with the legitimate aristocracy of France, amply rewarded the daughter of the Faubourg St Germain for the sacrifice she made to his brother-in-arms by giving up her armorial bearings and glorious name, to become the wife of a general without ancestry or fortune. He made his friend a Duke, and the Duchess d'Abrantés had no longer to be ashamed of her title: the descendant of the Comneni could be satisfied with the homage rendered her as the wife of the Governor of Lisbon, and with the laurels that adorned her husband's brow—to which he added a fresh spray, but also fresh wounds, on every battle-field.

The consequences of these wounds covered the hero's laurels with a dark mourning veil, and annihilated the domestic happiness of the Duchess. She perceived sooner than others the sorrowful condition of her husband, but kept it a secret from

everybody. She refused, however, to accompany the Duc d'Abrantés to his Illyrian government, and remained behind in Paris, still hoping that a change of climate and circumstances might restore her husband's health.

But Junot's mind was and remained diseased. The attacks of insanity and frenzy, which had formerly been isolated and rare, now became more frequent, and could no longer be kept secret. All Illyria knew that their Governor was a maniac, and yet no one dared to oppose his will or refuse obedience to his orders, but humbly awaited the return of the courier who had been sent to the Emperor in Paris.

"But heaven is high and the Emperor afar!" and much that was wrong could and did occur ere the courier returned to Trieste, where Junot resided. The sufferings of the poor duke daily increased, his outbreaks became more frequent and violent, and were produced by the slightest irritation.

On one occasion a nightingale that sang in the bushes under his window disturbed him in his sleep; the next morning Junot called out all the troops, and two battalions of Croats were

told off to begin a campaign against the poor nightingale which had dared to disturb the slumbers of the duke.

Another time Junot fancied he had discovered a great conspiracy formed by all the sheep in Illyria, and he directed the entire attention of the police, and all the severity of the law, against the harmless animals.

Then, again, he formed a sudden and romantic passion for a young Greek girl who was a member of his household. As the maiden sought to oppose the pride of her virtue to his solicitations, Junot became desperate, and resolved to fire his palace, and destroy his heart and his love in the flames. Fortunately, his purpose was discovered betimes, and the fire he had lighted was extinguished.

Next he was affected by a passionate dislike of all the noise and splendour that surrounded him, and he longed to retire from the bustle of festivities, and the brilliancy of his position, to the silent and unpretending existence of a poor peasant.

He continued to desire a life in a cabin, and as there was no one who possessed the right to divest him of his exalted dignity and gratify his

wishes, he resolved, of his own authority, to throw off the trammels that so oppressed his poor sick heart, and withdraw from the annoyances which his position entailed on him.

Under the pretext of making a tour of inspection through the provinces, he quitted Trieste, in order to lead for a few weeks a fresh existence, which appeared for a moment to soothe his excitement. Almost incognito he arrived at the little town of Goritzia, and inquired at the inn where he lodged for the most modest and insignificant house, dedicated to the harmless and innocent revelry of honest workmen. He was told that the house known as the "Icepit" was of that nature, where the labourers were wont to refresh themselves, after the fatigues of the day, over a social pitcher of the lightest beer or wine.

The Governor of Illyria took up his abode at the "Icepit." He rarely left it, either by day or night, and with the most harmless merriment he took part there, like the great Haroun al Raschid, in the innocent amusements of happy and contented poverty. Here this poor heart, once so great and benevolent, found its last consolation, its last joy; for here the duke found a friend!

This last friend of the Duc d'Abrantés, this Pylades of the poor mad Ortestes, was a lunatic! a poor idiot of good family, and so good-tempered and harmless that he was allowed to go about unwatched, and people only laughed at his follies, which inflicted injury on none. But in spite of his good humour he possessed a biting wit and clever buffoonery, which spared no rank or station.

The half-droll, half-sarcastic "Lazzi" of this Istrian Diogenes were soon alone able to distract the gloomy sorrow of the wandering hero; and it afforded him unending pleasure to hear the grandeur and brilliancy of society which he had gained so dearly, and yet enjoyed so slightly, turned into ridicule. The idiot possessed a peculiar talent for imitating, in the most burlesque fashion, the pomp of the Governor, and the French elegance of his officials, and when he did this, the delight of his poor princely friend knew no bounds.

After a scene of this description the Duc d'Abrantés once threw himself into the arms of his friend, and invested him with the noble insignia of the Legion of Honour, by placing on

his neck the Grand Cross of this order, which he himself wore.

The Emperor had given Junot full powers to grant this order in the provinces of Illyria and Istria; and hence no one was justified to deprive the lunatic Diogenes of the honours the governor himself had bestowed on him. For weeks, therefore, the mad fool would be seen walking about the streets of Goritzia, pluming himself like a peacock, on the Grand Cross of Napoleon's noble and honourable order; and at the same time making the most sarcastic and biting jokes about his own decoration. The Duc d'Abrantés frequently accompanied him on his wanderings; at one moment laughing loudly at the jokes of the lunatic, at another listening to them with breathless attention, as if they were the oracular sayings of a wise seer. Thus the strange pair walked through the streets, or sat down arm in arm upon a stone by the road-side, making strange remarks about the passers-by, or philosophizing about the vanity of reason and grandeur, the littleness and wickedness of the world, and thus realized the heart-rending and affecting scenes between Lear and his fool, which Shakspeare wrote for us.

After weeks of expectation, Napoleon's message at length arrived, which removed poor suffering Junot from his post and dignities, and appointed the Duke of Otranto in his stead.

The Duc d'Abrantés left Illyria and returned to France, where, after a long and painful struggle, he found in the little town of Maitbart a sad and solitary end to a life full of glory, heroic courage, and unstained honour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOUIS NAPOLEON AS A SELLER OF VIOLETS.

The sun, which had so long dazzled the eyes of Europe, was about to set—Napoleon's star began to be obscured by clouds. Fortune had bestowed on him everything which can be given to mortal man. She had laid nearly all Europe's crowns at his feet, she had made him the lord and master of numerous monarchies and nations. At Erfurt as well as at Dresden the Emperor's antechamber was the meeting-place of most of the legitimate or illegitimate princes of Europe. England alone had never covered her hostile face

with the mask of friendship. England alone had never bowed before a dreaded and hated neighbour. Napoleon, the lord of continental Europe, whom emperors and kings called "brother," and in doing so felt flattered,—Napoleon might now begin to look back upon his past. He had risen so high that he needed no longer to deny the lowly sphere whence he sprung.

During the time the Congress of Erfurt was assembled, all the emperors and kings present were one day assembled round Napoleon's table. He sat between the Russian Czar, his enthusiastic friend, and the Emperor of Austria, his father-in-law, whilst opposite to him were the King of Prussia, his ally, from whom he had taken Westphalia and the Rhenish provinces, and the Kings of Bavaria and Wurtemberg, who had received their regal crowns from Napoleon's hand, and who had given their children in marriage to the Emperor's family; the former having married his daughter to Eugène Beauharnois, and the latter being father-in-law of Jérôme Bonaparte.

There were also present the King of Saxony, and the Grand-duke of Baden (who had married Josephine's niece, Stephanie de Beauharnois).

They all were legitimate princes, whose pedigrees might show proud dynasties, and in the midst of them sat the son of a Corsican lawyer, who was now Emperor of the French, and to whom they all looked with respect and admiration.

The conversation turned on Napoleon's marvellously good memory, and the Emperor was willing to explain to his guests how he had acquired it.

"While still a lieutenant," he began; but immediately the looks of his audience were fixed on their plates, shame and confusion seemed to have seized the guests, and on the brow of the Austrian Emperor appeared a cloud of anger at this allusion to the low origin of his son-in-law.

Napoleon noticed it and threw an angry glance round the table. Then, after a slight pause, he took up his narrative again and began once more, and with marked accentuation, "When I had the honour to be a lieutenant—"

Alexander of Russia alone remained unembarrassed, he placed his hand on Napoleon's shoulder, and smilingly nodded. He was the only one who listened with pleasure to the story

about the time when Bonaparte "had the honour of being a lieutenant."

Napoleon had risen so high that hardly anything was left him to desire, for Fortune had granted him even what he had wished most ardently for, an heir. On the 20th of May, 1811, his wife, Marie Louise, had given birth to a son, and the little King of Rome was welcomed by the whole nation as the heir of his great father. Napoleon's dynasty seemed consolidated. Numerous festivities took place in celebration of the happy event.

There were balls and banquets given by the Queen of Naples, in the house of the Grandduchess of Guastala, and by all the Dukes of the empire, as well as the Queen of Holland.

Hortense felt ill and suffering; a nervous headache had tormented her for some time, and betrayed the secret of her sufferings, which she tried to conceal within her breast.

The roses on her cheek had faded away, her eyes were less bright than formerly. At Malmaison her mother was bewailing her unhappy fate, and after Hortense had endeavoured to dry

her tears and soothe the pang of her heart, she was compelled to hasten to the Tuileries, to display a smiling face to her who was "her Empress," and the happy rival of her mother.

But Hortense had made up her mind to take life as it was; she meant to play her part in a manner worthy of her and her mother. Accordingly she endeavoured to be a true and faithful friend to the Empress, and to meet the wishes of her stepfather, who desired her to see society in her house, and to take part in the festivities of the court.

"The Emperor wishes it, the Emperor said so,"—this was sufficient for all who surrounded him, and for Hortense not the less than the rest. Her mother lived in retirement because the Emperor willed it, Hortense had remained at court because it was his wish that she should do so, and she now saw society because the Emperor demanded it.

But the parties of the Carnival of 1813 were of a sad and gloomy character. How many cripples and invalids had not the last year made! There was a terrible scarcity of dancing young men at the balls; continual wars had made them

old before their time, and most of them were lame and crippled.

But the conqueror's ambition was not yet satiated. There were still a few crowns he had not yet weighed in his hand. Russia was one of them, and he had as yet been unable to break a gem out of her diadem. Napoleon, therefore, marched to Russia, to seek the crown of the czars in the Kremlin.

But his star grew pale amidst the flames of Moscow, the sun of his glory and renown was unable to melt the snow and ice that destroyed his splendid army on the banks of the Beresina and at Wilna. Fortune had deserted the conqueror; and, stripped of his glory and his legions, Napoleon returned from Russia.

The year 1813 began in an ominous manner. Superstitious and timid people considered the very number 13 indicative of misfortune, and beheld with dismay that the year opened with a Friday. New-year's day was nevertheless welcomed with the customary merry-making. People tried to drown the warning voice of presentiment in the sounds of joyous music. The Emperor ordered that balls should be given at court,

and by the members of the Imperial family. He wished to prove to the Parisians that his confidence in the future was undiminished. Napoleon did not wish the campaign of 1812 to be regarded as a great national misfortune. Those who had been robbed of their fathers or brothers in the ice-fields of Russia, without even the satisfaction of having lost them through death in battle, were obliged to conceal their tears, and those whose relations had returned crippled and broken in health were expected to celebrate this return with rejoicing and festivities.

The Emperor had ordered that balls should be given, and Hortense obeyed. She arranged quadrilles "*en costume*," for which she herself designed the dresses, and composed the music, and since able-bodied young men were so scarce that dancing could not be enjoyed to any considerable extent, she introduced new pastimes and amusements. Charades were acted and *tableaux vivants* represented.

But whilst Hortense was thus the soul of court festivity, whilst seemingly she heartily enjoyed the fleeting hour, her mind was troubled by gloomy presentiments of the misfortune which she

well knew was not to be averted. She meant to prepare for the days of trial in regard to herself, and wished to impress her two beloved sons with a deep sense of the instability and vanity of earthly grandeur, and with a manly contempt of danger. She had no compassion for the tender age of the boys of eight and six, because she loved them too well to wish to bring them up effeminately. She possessed the sterling affection of an energetic mother, who does not indulge her child, but subjects it to a severe course of training, that it may be able to sustain the struggle with adversity and resist the arrows of fate. Hortense, in the midst of her splendour, never missed an opportunity of speaking to her sons of days of misfortune which they ought to face without shrinking.

One day the Duchess of Bassano gave a ball in honour of the Queen, and Hortense, although sad and suffering, left her *coussin*, and allowed herself to be dressed. Her fair hair, which when unfastened reached down to her feet, was arranged in the ancient Greek fashion and ornamented with a garland of flowers. These were no natural ones, however, but made of

diamonds. She wore a dress of rose-coloured crape, embroidered with a garland of large silver hortensias. The skirt of her dress and her train were garnished with violets and roses, made of precious stones, and on her bosom glistened a *bouquet* of diamonds and hortensias. Necklace and bracelets were of the same costly material, and represented similar flowers.

In this splendid dress (it was a present, sent to her, on the previous day, by her mother) she entered the drawing-room, followed by the richly-attired ladies and gentlemen of her Court, who were to follow her to the ball.

It was a fine sight offered by this room full of ladies glittering with diamonds, and of officers in rich uniforms. The sons of Hortense, who at this moment entered the salon to take leave of their "bonne petite maman," stopped short, as if dazzled for the moment by so much splendour, and then approached their mother almost timidly. She seemed to appear before them like one of the genii in the Arabian Nights. The Queen guessed the thoughts of her boys, whose ingenuous faces resembled an open book, wherein every

one of their feelings might be read. She stretched out a hand to each of the children, and proceeded to a chair, on which she sat down. The younger, Louis Napoleon, who was then six years of age, she took on her lap, whilst Napoleon Louis, two years older than his brother, remained standing at his mother's side, resting his curly head on her shoulder, and looking up with a thoughtful eye to her pale cheek. "Well, Napoleon," said Hortense, as she laid her white, elegant hand on the head of her eldest son, "do you not think I am very beautifully dressed to-day? Should you love me less if I were poor, if I wore no diamonds, but only a simple black dress? should you like me less then?"

"No, mamma," replied the boy, almost colouring with anger; and little Louis Napoleon, who was sitting on his mother's lap, repeated with his tender voice the words of his brother, "No, mamma!"

The Queen smiled, and said:

"Diamonds and fine dresses do not make people happy. We three should love each other quite as well if we possessed none, but were poor.

But tell me, Napoleon, what should you do, if you had nothing, and were left alone in the world? what should you do to maintain yourself?"

"I should become a soldier," replied Napoleon, with glistening eyes, "and fight so valiantly that they should be obliged to promote me!"

"And you, Louis? What should you do to earn your bread?"

The little boy had attentively listened to what his brother said, and seemed still to be thinking about it. It appeared he considered the knapsack and the musket too heavy for him. He thought he was too young to be a soldier.

"I," he said after a pause,—"I should sell bouquets of violets, like the poor little boy that stands at the gate of the Tuileries, and to whom you always give something when passing."

The ladies and gentlemen, who had listened to the children's talk, burst out laughing at little Louis's answer.

"Do not laugh, ladies," the Queen said, with a serious face, "it was no jest. I intended to give my sons a lesson, as I saw they were dazzled by the splendour of our diamonds. It is generally

the misfortune of princes to imagine that they are made of a different material from other men, and therefore have no obligations towards them. They rarely know anything about human sufferings and want, and think it almost impossible that these should ever assail them. As soon, therefore, as adversity befalls them, they are so surprised and disconcerted that they cannot find the strength to resist, but are crushed. From such a fate I will preserve my sons!"

Hortense kissed the two boys, and went with her suite to the Tuileries. The two little princes continued to discuss for a long time whether it would be easier to earn one's bread by becoming a soldier or by selling violets at the gate of the Tuileries.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DAYS OF ADVERSITY.

The banquets and balls amongst which the Parisians tried to forget approaching danger were soon to come to a close. The thunder of the cannon that roared on the battle-fields of Hanau and Leipzig had drowned the sounds of the ball music in the Tuileries, and the saloon of Queen Hortense, where people had been accustomed to sing and to play, now saw the hands of the ladies occupied with making lint for the wounded, who daily poured from the army into the hospitals of Paris.

Austria's and Russia's declaration of war had startled France out of her sweet dream of security, and battles lost had announced to her the sinking of the star which so long had shone over the Emperor's armies. Everybody felt the proximity of a crisis, everybody was preparing to fill the place which honour or duty should assign him in the hour when the storm, which hung in threatening clouds over France, should burst. It was at this time that Louis Napoleon returned from Grätz. He had heard the thunder-peals of Leipzig, and hastened to the defence of his brother. Hortense heard of his return with the feelings of a patriot, rather than those of a wife.

"I rejoice," she said, "that my husband has come back. His return at the moment when all Europe rises against our country shows that he is a good Frenchman. He is a man of honour, and if we have been unable to sympathize with each other, it was because we both possessed faults that could not be reconciled.

"I," she added with a melancholy smile, after a pause, "I was too proud. They had spoilt me. I thought too much of myself, and that is a poor way to win a suspicious and suffering heart. He

shows himself worthy of his character as a king by returning to join with all Frenchmen in the defence of his country. In this way alone we can show our gratitude for what the nation have done for our family."

In the first days of January, 1814, all Paris was seized by a panic. The rumour spread that the enemy had crossed the frontiers of France, and that the Russians, Austrians, and Prussians were marching on the capital. For the first time after many a year of triumph, France trembled for her army, and believed in the possibility of a defeat.

In the Tuileries there reigned a gloomy apprehension. When in former days the Emperor had departed for the army, they had always asked: "When shall we hear of the first victory?" On the present occasion they beheld with dismay the pale, careworn countenance of Napoleon.

The Emperor left Paris on the 24th of January, to take the command of the army. The Empress Maria Louisa was nominated Regent, and had a council at her side, that was composed of the Emperor's brothers and ministers. The Empress bid her husband adieu amidst tears, and Hortense,

who was present at the farewell meeting, was obliged to stay with her for a long time in order to eonsole her.

Hortense was far from really feeling the eonfidence she displayed to the Empress and her own eourt. She never had been able to believe in the stability of Napoleon's triumph and greatness, she had always been secretly preparing for the approaching danger, and therefore felt courageous now that the hour of adversity had actually arrived. She was ready to stand up in defenee of her children, and showed composure and equanimity, whilst all the imperial family trembled and despaired, and whilst the eapital was terrified by the message, "The Cossacks are coming!"

The Grand-duke Constantine was said to have promised his troops that they should warm themselves with the ashes of Paris, and the Emperor Alexander to have taken an oath that he would not rest until he had slept in the Tuileries.

In the capital people talked about nothing but pillage, murder, and outrage. They trembled not only for their lives but for their property also, and hastened to conceal money, jewellery, and

plate, to prevent them falling into the hands of the rapacious Cossack hordes.

Such hiding-places were constructed in the cellars or in the walls. The Duchess of Bassano ordered all her valuable moveables to be brought into a small and remote cabinet, the door to which she had bricked up and covered with paper. But unfortunately, amongst other things, several clocks were placed there, which they had forgotten to stop, and their striking the hours revealed for a whole week the place of concealment, which had been prepared with so much secrecy.

On Feb. 9, Macon was captured, and the Parisians, who will laugh and make jokes even on the day of judgment, declared that Macon was unable to hold out, because it was attacked by *pièces de vingt-quatre,* and could only oppose to them *pièces de vingt vins.* Then it was added:

"The sovereigns will make their entry by the Barrier des Trône, the Emperor will depart by that of Enfer, the Empress by that of des Vertus, the Senators by the Barrier des Bons-hommes, the Councillors of State by Bicêtre, and the legislative corps and the national guard by Pantin."

The cry, "The Cossacks are coming!" however, was not the only one that startled the Parisians. There was another shout, which had not been heard for a long time, and whose sounds were unknown to Imperial France. That shout was "The Count of Lille!" or in the mouth of the Royalists, "King Louis the Eighteenth."

The legitimists no longer mentioned that name in a whisper, but pronounced it with loud enthusiasm. Even those Royalists who had paid homage to the Emperor, and accepted kindnesses and distinctions from him, began to remove their masks and to show their natural countenance.

Madame du Cayla was one of the latter description: although one of the most enthusiastic Royalists, she had frequently mixed with the society of the Imperial court. This lady now went to Hartwell, to convey to the Comte de Lille the assurance of the Parisian Royalists that they would remain faithful to him, and were longing to see him return to his country. They were preparing, she said, to accelerate the Count's restitution to the throne of his fathers.

Madame du Cayla returned with full powers to organize the conspiracy of the Royalists, and to

sanction, in the name of the king, all their steps. Talleyrand, Napoleon's minister, that talented weathercock of politics, had already begun to experience a change of opinion. When the Countess du Cayla entered the cabinet of the premier, to whom she had to deliver some secret messages from Louis XVIII., she said with a loud voice,

"I have just come from Hartwell, I have seen the king, and he sends me to say—"

But Talleyrand interrupted her, by calling out in an angry voice,

"Are you mad, madam? You dare to confess such a crime?"

A moment afterwards he added in a whisper:

"So you have seen him? Well, you know I am his most humble and devoted servant."

The Royalists now began to hold their conferences and meetings pretty openly. The minister of police, Fouché, the Duke of Otranto, whose eyes and ears were everywhere, who received information of all that passed in Paris,—Fouché was not ignorant of these plots of the Royalists, but he did not try to prevent them. On the contrary, he advised the legitimists to be cautious in their proceedings, in order to show

how much interest he himself took in the fate of the unfortunate royal family.

Queen Hortense, amidst all these dangers and disturbances, preserved her presence of mind and her usual courage. Far from concealing her diamonds, money, and papers, as others had done, she continued to live in the same style as before. She wished to show the Parisians what unshaken confidence the Imperial family felt, and how firm was their belief in victory. Accordingly, she lived in her usual regal manner, although for a long time nothing had been paid her out of the exhausted treasury. But she little cared for money; the high-minded, unselfish heart of the Queen was occupied by other thoughts than those about hiding her gold, or securing her pecuniary interests.

She wished to inspire the Empress Maria Louisa, whom the Emperor had nominated Regent of France, with the courage she herself possessed. She besought her that in these days of danger and anxiety she would show herself worthy of the high confidence the Emperor had reposed in her, by adopting bold and energetic measures. When, on the 28th of March, the ru-

mour spread that the allies were no further than five leagues distant from Paris, when thousands of fugitives left the capital, Hortense hastened to the Tuileries to advise the Empress not to leave Paris, but courageously to remain at the post where her husband had placed her. In the name of Napoleon and of the little king of Rome she implored Maria Louisa not to heed the resolution of the Council of Regency, who had declared "that Paris was incapable of defence, and that therefore the Empress, her son, and the Council of Regency should leave the capital."

However, Maria Louisa would not listen to Hortense's high-minded advice; the Queen was unable to inspire her young sister-in-law with the energy by which she herself was animated.

"My sister," she said, "you cannot be ignorant of the consequences of your leaving Paris. No defence of the capital will be attempted, and it may be your fault if you lose your crown. But I see you are ready to resign yourself to such a loss very easily."

"You are right," Maria Louisa answered; "I ought to act differently, but it is too late now.

The Council of Regeney have decided, and what can I do?"

Hortense, very much grieved, returned to her hôtel, where Lavalette, the wife of the Marshal Ney, and the ladies of her court, had been anxiously awaiting her.

"All is lost!" she said, with so sad an expression on her face, as had never been remarked on it before. "Yes, all is lost! The Empress is bent upon leaving Paris. She seems to give up, without much regret, the Emperor and France. She is about to start."

"If such be the case," General Lavalette replied, "then indeed all is lost! And yet her courage and energy might this day save the Emperor, who is hastening towards Paris. So they have deliberated until they have chosen the very worst line of conduct. Well, it cannot be helped! But what will your Majesty do?"

"I remain in Paris," replied the Queen. "Since I am allowed to be mistress of my actions, I shall stay with the Parisians, and share their good or evil fortune. That is better, at all events, than being made a prisoner on the high road."

As soon as the Queen had formed this resolution, she displayed the greatest calmness and composure. With unflinching courage she waited to see what the future would bring. She sent a messenger to Malmaison, to her poor mother, who had been forgotten by almost every one, imploring her to retreat to Navarre, and as it was already late at night she retired to her bedroom.

In the middle of the night she was awakened in a melancholy manner. Her husband, who since his return to France had never come near her, desired to exercise in the hour of danger his rights as head of the family. He wrote to the Queen, and demanded that she should follow, with her two sons, the Empress Maria Louisa.

Hortense refused compliance with his wishes. A second categorical message was the result, in which Louis told her that, unless she fulfilled his commands immediately, and followed, with her children, the Empress, to whom his brother had confided the Regency, he would make use of his paternal rights, and take the two princes without delay out of her hands. At this threat the Queen started up from her bed like an irritated

lionness. Her cheeks were feverish, her eyes burning; with a loud voice she ordered her two sons to be brought to her, clasped the boys passionately to her bosom, and said:

"Tell the King that I will depart this very hour."

CHAPTER XX.

THE ALLIES IN PARIS.

What the departure of the Empress and the approach of the Cossacks had been unable to bring about, maternal love had effected. The Queen left the capital. With her children and her suite (which already began to grow very thin) she left Paris, and arrived, after a long and fatiguing flight, already rendered unsafe by the flying cavalry of the Russians, at the castle of Navarre, where Josephine received her in her arms. Although everything else was lost, although her greatness had vanished, and her heart was still

oppressed by Napoleon's misfortune, Josephine possessed at least her daughter. Her most faithful friend stood by her side, and that was no small consolation in this time of sorrow and apprehension.

At Navarre Hortense learned the fall of the empire, the surrender of the capital, its occupation by the allies, and the abdication of the Emperor.

When the courier whom the Duke of Bassano had despatched with these news arrived at Navarre to tell Josephine that Napoleon had been ordered to Elba, and was about to leave France for this place of exile, she threw herself on Hortense's breast, and said:

"Oh, Hortense, he is unhappy, and I cannot be with him! He has been banished to Elba. Oh, if it was not for his wife I should hasten to him and share his exile."

Whilst Josephine wept and sighed, Hortense, who had retired to her apartments, thought of the consequences Napoleon's fall must have for the members of the Imperial family. She foresaw all the humiliations and persecutions that were to befall them, and resolved to escape them

with her children. Her resolution was a sudden one, and suddenly was it to be carried into execution. She called Mademoiselle de Cochelet, her reader, who was one of the few ladies who had remained by her side, and addressed her as follows :

"Louisa, I shall emigrate. I stand alone in the world, without any one to protect me, always menaced by a blow which is more terrible than the loss of greatness and crowns,—I mean the danger of being deprived of my children. My mother can remain in France, for divorce has given her back her liberty, but I bear a name which henceforth will be a crime in this country. Remember the Bourbons are returning. I have no other property but my diamonds. I shall sell them and go with my children to Martinique, where my mother possesses a plantation. I have been there when a child, and still remember the island with pleasure. It is doubtless a hard lot to be obliged to leave my country, my mother and my friends, but in the presence of great events we must have great courage. I shall educate my children carefully, and that will be my consolation."

Mademoiselle de Cochelet shed tears of emotion as she bowed to the Queen, and then asked permission to accompany her. She implored it so earnestly that Hortense at last granted her wish. They agreed that Louisa should proceed to Paris, to make, with all possible secrecy, the necessary preparations for the voyage of the Queen. Mademoiselle set out accordingly on the following day, accompanied by a courier.

What a terrible change had been going on at Paris! What a frightful picture the capital presented! The gates were guarded by Cossacks, and in the streets nothing could be seen but Russian, Austrian, or Prussian uniforms, frequently in the company of the ladies of the Faubourg St Germain. These Royalists now enjoyed their triumph, and in their ecstacy treated the conquerors of France with the same devoted affection as they would have bestowed on the Bourbons, who were to return within a few days.

Hortense's former hôtel was occupied by a Swedish regiment of foot, and all the servants had fled. The brilliant and elegant reception-rooms now served to lodge the soldiery of a vic-

torious enemy. At the Tuileries preparations were being made for the reception of the king.

Nobody dared to pronounce the name of Napoleon. Those who once had flattered him most were the first to desert him; those on whom he had bestowed the greatest kindnesses were most ready to condemn him, that they might, as they thought, cause the benefits they had received from him to be forgotten. The most enthusiastic Napoleonists suddenly turned zealous Royalists, and stuck the largest white cockades on their hats, the better to attract the attention of the new masters.

But there was one man who still loved and admired the fallen Cæsar, and openly manifested the esteem he felt for Napoleon. It was Alexander, the Emperor of Russia.

He loved Napoleon so much, that even the political enmity, which had been forced upon him, was unable to extinguish his feelings of friendship and admiration for the hero, who for so many years had been the master of Europe.

Napoleon's fate had already been sealed. To the generous efforts of the Czar alone he was indebted for the allies having granted his wish,

and given him the island of Elba as a sovereign kingdom. Alexander could do no more for Napoleon, but he now turned to the Emperor's family, and endeavoured to be useful to them.

The Empress Maria Louisa had no need of his assistance; she had not availed herself of the permission of the allies to follow her husband to Elba, but had placed herself and her son under the protection of her father, the Emperor of Austria.

Alexander therefore bestowed all his sympathy on Napoleon's first wife, and her two children, the Viceroy of Italy, and the Queen of Holland. His interest in the Queen was so great, that he said he was resolved to visit Hortense at Navarre (if she should refuse coming to Paris), in order to hear from her own lips in what manner he might be useful to her, and how she should like to see her fate decided.

The Emperor's minister, Nesselrode, was anxious to preserve these benevolent feelings in the breast of his master, and no one was more anxious to serve the Queen than he. Count Nesselrode, who had for a long time been intimately acquainted with Mademoiselle de Coche-

let, wished to give this lady proof of his sincerity, and he well knew that the best way of doing so would be the endeavour to assist Hortense and her children. Mademoiselle de Cochelet acquainted her friend with the Queen's intention of leaving France and emigrating to Martinique. The Count smiled sadly on hearing this desperate resolution of a brave maternal heart, and commissioned Mademoiselle to beg the Queen to let him know all her wishes and demands, in order that he might communicate them to the Emperor.

The sympathy with Hortense's fate was general. In one of the conferences held by the ministers of the allies, where the fate of France, and that of the Bourbons and the Napoleonists was to be decided, the question was asked, What should be done for the family of the Emperor? The Prince of Benevento said:

"I plead for Queen Hortense alone; she is the only one I esteem in the Imperial family."

Count Nesselrode added:

"Who would not be proud to call her his country-woman? She is a pearl to France!"

And Metternich too had praises for her.

However, neither the favourable reports of Mademoiselle de Cochelet, nor yet her remonstrances and entreaties, could induce the Queen to come to Paris. She was not to be prevailed upon to leave her place of retirement.

May we be allowed to cite one of the letters which Hortense wrote to Mademoiselle de Cochelet on this subject? It will serve to illustrate the noble and truly woman-like feelings of the Queen.

This letter runs as follows:

"My dear Louise,

"All my friends ask me the same question as yourself. What do you wish? what do you want? and to every one of them I reply as I do to you, 'I want nothing.' For what should I wish? Is my fate not already settled? And, besides, a woman who has the courage to take a great resolution, who boldly faces the idea of a voyage to India or America, what need has she to ask anything from any one? Pray do not take any steps I should be obliged to disown. I know you love me, and that might carry you away, but if you look at it closely I am not so very much to be pitied after all. I suffered much in the midst of that splen-

dour I have lost, and perhaps I shall now at last find that rest which is far preferable to the proud bustle that once surrounded me. I do not think I can remain in France, for the lively interest the people take in my fate might beget suspicion. This thought is depressing, I feel it. But never fear, I shall not bring any one into trouble. My brother will be happy enough, and my mother can remain in France, and in possession of her estates. I shall go abroad with my children, and as the happiness of those I love will then be secured, I shall very well be able to bear a misfortune that only affects my position, not my heart. I am still trembling and quite confused, from what I heard of the fate of the Emperor and his family. So it is really true? All is settled already? Do write me all about it! I hope they will at least leave me my children; if *they* should be taken from me, my heart would fail me. I will educate them in such a manner that they shall feel happy in all situations of life. I will teach them to bear greatness or misfortune with equal dignity, and to find true happiness in being satisfied with themselves. That is more precious than all the crowns of the world. They

are quite well, I am thankful to say. Please to thank Nesselrode for the interest he takes in me. I assure you there are days which must be called unhappy ones, but which yet possess a peculiar charm, I mean those during which one is enabled to see the true feelings of others towards oneself. I enjoy the affection you show me, and it shall always give me pleasure to tell you how much I return it.

"HORTENSE."

Hortense remained with her mother at the castle of Navarre. She was determined not to issue from the obscurity of her retirement, but continued to bewail the fall of the Imperial house, and felt almost indifferent about her own future.

Her friends, however, thought and acted for her. For Hortense had friends in her misfortune even. Mademoiselle de Cochelet, the most zealous and devoted of these friends, was restlessly endeavouring to save some valuables out of the wreck of Imperial France.

Mademoiselle de Cochelet was still in Paris. The letters she wrote daily to the Queen, and in which she related everything that passed in

the capital, are a faithful and interesting picture of that strange and unsettled time, and it would be wrong not to quote some of them.

In one of her first letters, the lady relates a conversation she had with Count Nesselrode concerning the fate of the Queen.

"The Bourbons," she writes, "there is no longer any doubt, will return. I asked Count Nesselrode, from whom I have just returned, 'whether the Queen would be allowed to remain in France. Will the new masters approve of it?'

"'Surely,' he replied, 'I am certain of it, for we shall make it one of our conditions, and without us they can never hope to reign. It is not the Bourbons, it is we, it is Europe, who manage matters in France. *I trust* they will never violate the treaty. You may rest assured that the Emperor Alexander will always uphold the just cause.'

"All the strangers here speak with great enthusiasm of you, Madame. Monsieur de Metternich, who doubtless remembers the great kindness you showed his wife and children, has repeatedly inquired after you. Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg feels the most devoted affection

for you and the Empress Josephine, wishing nothing so much as to be able to serve you both. Count Nesselrode is of opinion that it would be well if you were to write to the Emperor Alexander. He takes great interest in your personal welfare.

"The old nobility are already very much dissatisfied. They believe themselves *encanaillés* at seeing so many new elements mixed with them."

A few days afterwards Mademoiselle de Cochelet writes:

"Come to Malmaison with the Empress Josephine; the Czar will go and see you there, without delay. He is impatient to make your acquaintance, and you ought to feel a little indebted to him, since he takes care of your interests as if they were his own. The Duke of Vicenza, who behaves so nobly in this crisis, has commissioned me to tell you that the happiness of your children depends on your coming to Malmaison.

"The Emperor Napoleon has signed a treaty, which settles the fate of his family. They are all allowed to remain in France, and their titles are left them. You have for yourself and your children an annuity of 400,000 francs.

"It is said that the Faubourg St Germain is furious about the Imperial family being so well provided for. They do not show themselves very grateful for the kindnesses they have received at the hands of the Emperor.

"You wish to go and live in Switzerland? Count Nesselrode thinks it is no bad idea. That country was always a good place of retirement, but he is of opinion that you ought not to give up the asylum you have found here. At all events you must preserve yourself the right of returning to France.

"Just fancy, Madame, Count Nesselrode wants me to see his Emperor. I have not yet consented, because I do not like to do anything without your sanction; however, I confess I should like to make his acquaintance. They speak so much good of you! I am quite happy to hear it.

"Count Nesselrode said to me yesterday: 'Tell the Queen that I shall be happy to fulfil all her wishes, and that I am able to do it. I have sufficient power.' He would like to make for your additional protection, a particular clause independent from the treaty I mentioned. I do

not know what to answer, you must advise me, but I entreat you ask for something."

The Queen, however, answered this letter by simply sending a letter for the Emperor Napoleon, begging Count Nesselrode to forward it to its address.

"It is strange," writes Mademoiselle de Cochelet in reference to it, "that all my efforts to serve you have no other result than your begging Count Nesselrode to forward to Fontainebleau a letter addressed to the Emperor. At first he thought I was bringing him the letter for his master for which he had begged. But he knows how to appreciate all that is noble and great. He possesses a wonderfully delicate tact, and thinks that the letter cannot well be transmitted to the Emperor by him. He will send it to Fontainebleau, addressed to the Duke of Vicenza, who is to give it to Napoleon."

Another letter of Mademoiselle de Cochelet runs as follows:—

"I have just seen Count Nesselrode. He inquired after you. The Emperor of Russia has taken up his quarters in the Elysée Bourbon. The Count told me an anecdote that circulates

here, and relates to a scene which is said to have taken place between the Empress Maria Louisa and the kings, her brothers-in-law. They intended to lift her forcibly into a carriage, in order to continue her flight. She resisted, and the King of Westphalia is said to have become so angry as to beat her a little bit. She cried out for assistance, and General Caftarelli, who commanded the escort, came to her rescue. The next day she was made prisoner, and all the crown diamonds she carried with her were taken from her. It seems that being caught was just what she wanted.

"The allies are furious against the Duke of Bassano. I have taken his part, for you know how much attached I am to his wife.

"The Queen of Westphalia has arrived at Paris, and the Emperor Alexander, her cousin, immediately went to see her. They think she will return to her father.

"The fate of your brother will assume a fortunate shape, but it is not quite settled yet. There are many intrigues at work regarding it, Count Nesselrode tells me. As regards the kingdom of Naples, no one speaks about it.

From the details Nesselrode communicates to me concerning the last campaign, I can see that many of our ministers and generals are very guilty, and looked upon with contempt. He tells me that but a week previous to the fall of Paris, the allies did not think they would conquer us, and so late as the 10th of March they thought peace had been concluded with Prussia.

"Do not feel uneasy about the fate of the Emperor at Elba. Napoleon himself has chosen the island, though the allies would have preferred any other place.

"All the couriers who have lately arrived here have been stopped. Amongst the letters they brought, there was one from the Empress Maria Louisa to her husband. She informs him that her son was well and had slept soundly; but when he awoke, he cried and said he had dreamed of papa. They wanted to know what he had dreamed, but neither promises nor toys could make him speak. The Empress felt uneasy about it.

"There is a rumour afloat that one of the marshals had asked the Emperor Alexander what rank his wife should occupy at the new Court.

He then expressed his astonishment that the army had not been consulted on the question of the Constitution. Alexander answered that he was accustomed to give orders to the army, but not to receive any from them.

"Prince Leopold lives in the same house with the Countess Tascher. His thoughts are continually occupied with you and your mother. He at least is not forgetful of the kindness you both have shown him. I understand he will speak to the Emperor of Russia and then write to you.

"All your friends are of opinion that you ought to think of your children, and accept the lot they have shaped out here for you. Monsieur de Lavalette and the Duke of Vicenza share this opinion. You lose quite enough as it is, and you may fairly permit your conquerors to give back to you part of what they took from you, and what is your lawful property.

"All your friends demand is that you should come to Malmaison as soon as Napoleon has left Fontainebleau. I am assured that the Emperor Alexander would go to see you at Navarre if you should decline coming to Malmaison. You see

the meeting is not to be avoided, and besides you ought to bear in mind that the fate of your children lies in your hand. In the treaty of Fontainebleau they have mentioned you together with your sons. This is a certain guarantee to you, and shows the high esteem every one feels for you. All are anxious to arrange matters so as to gladden your maternal heart.

"To the Emperor of Russia, above all, you are indebted for this protection. When the Duke of Vicenza laid this treaty before Napoleon to receive his signature, the Emperor expressed his full approbation. Thus your unconditional right over your children has been acknowledge, and nothing but your consent is wanted to offer you assistance. You have no right to reject the gifts offered to your sons. I think very few would prove so difficult to persuade into an acceptance of kindnesses.

"Madame Tascher, who proves herself so faithful a relation to you, has been to see the Duke of Dalberg, who is one of the members of the provisional government. She turned the conversation to you, and I will give you the Duke's answer literally. 'We consider her as not at all

belonging to the family of the Bonapartes, for she has separated from her husband. She will be the support of her children; it is well they have been left her. She might be very happy beloved and esteemed as she is. She can remain in France and do whatever she pleases; but it is necessary she should now come to Paris.'

"As soon as the Countess had left the Duke of Dalberg, she came to tell me the substance of their conversation.

"Now you know what friend and enemy think about you. Those who do not rejoice in the favour shown to you are wicked people. Almost every one says, 'As to the Queen, what has she to regret? The good she has done? Now, at last people will dare to love her and say so. Her wishes are so modest, she is so gentle!'

"You see it seems as if they considered it advantageous to you to have fallen from your height. They think your personal merits will now stand out to full advantage. 'Her value lies in herself,' they say; 'she will appear much greater without the encumbrance of a court.'

"Yesterday I saw the gentlemen who have just arrived from Fontainebleau, Messieurs de

Lascour and de Lavoestine. They called on me to know where they might find you. They mean to join you immediately, either at Navarre or Malmaison. You will find them two devoted knights.

"'It does not matter what becomes of her,' they say, 'we shall at all events be enabled to show our attachment, and have the advantage of not being accused of hypocrisy.'

"This last fortnight has been an interesting one to Fontainebleau. All these young men wished to accompany the Emperor, even Messieurs Labedoyère and Montesquieu. The Emperor, however, has declined their offer, and in dismissing them said: 'They ought never to cease serving France zealously.'

"Lascour and Lavoestine, as well as a great many other officers, are very angry with the generals who left Fontainebleau without taking leave of the Emperor.

"There is a rumour of the Emperor having said, when speaking of Josephine, 'She was right, my giving her up has brought me bad luck.'

"They say that the Duchess of Montebello is going to leave the Empress Maria Louisa."

Entreaty and flattery proved ineffectual to curb the noble pride of the Queen; her resolution was not to be shaken. She was still of opinion that she was playing a more dignified part in staying away from Paris than if she were to resort to the capital, where the ladies of the Faubourg St Germain were celebrating with foreign officers the victory of Royalism.

Instead of complying with the wishes of Mademoiselle de Cochelet, the Queen wrote the following letter:

"My dear Louisa,

"You are dissatisfied with my resolution. You all accuse me of being childishly obstinate. You treat me unjustly. My mother can follow the advice of the Duke of Vicenza, she may go to Malmaison, but I shall REMAIN HERE. I have good reasons for doing so. I cannot separate my cause from that of my children. It is they and their nearest relations who are the sufferers in every thing that is done. I will therefore keep aloof from those who overthrow our fortune. The more patiently I bear these blows of fate, which have changed my whole situation (and perhaps

made it a more peaceful one), the less must I show it. I must be affected by our misfortune, and will appear to be so, without approaching those who would consider me a suppliant, even were I not to ask for anything.

"I believe you, that the Emperor of Russia wishes me well. I have heard much that is to his advantage, even from Napoleon, but if formerly I was desirous of making his acquaintance, I dislike in this moment the very idea of seeing him. Is he not our vanquisher? All your friends must in their heart applaud my resolution, whatever they may say. Retirement and solitude alone become me. After having been with your friends sufficiently long you will return to me. Then, perhaps, I shall go to a watering-place, for my chest is very weak. I do not know whether it is the fault of the air of Navarre, but since I have been here I can hardly breathe. People here think that the great events with their exciting influence are the cause of it, but they are mistaken. Death has spared us all, and the loss of a lofty station in life is not the greatest trial a person can experience. What happiness have I lost? My brother, I hope, will be properly treated.

Henceforth he will no longer be exposed to danger. He must feel very uneasy on our score. I dare not write to him, for my letters would be intercepted. If you should have occasion to see him, tell him that we are no longer in danger. Adieu! I command you once more not to do anything for me. I fear your liveliness and your affection, and yet I like to rely on them. My children are perfectly well. My mother opposes all my plans, but nevertheless I shall go to her who is still more unhappy than we are.

"HORTENSE."

She of whom Hortense thought she was still more unhappy, was Napoleon's wife, Maria Louisa, who now had left Blois, the seat of the Regency, and gone to Rambouillet, there to wait until the allies should have decided her fate and that of her son. In this eventful time it was certainly not the least surprising spectacle to see almost all the sovereigns of Europe, as well as the ex-rulers of France and those who were about to re-assume the government, collected within the narrow circle of Paris and its immediate neighbourhood. In the Tuileries there was a Bourbon,

Bonaparte was at Fontainebleau, his wife and son at Rambouillet, the divorced Empress stayed at Navarre, while the Emperors of Russia and Austria, as well as the King of Prussia, had taken up their quarters in Paris. Besides these there were to be found a number of petty German sovereigns, and the Napoleonistic kings and dukes, who all lived in the capital or its neighbourhood.

The Queen of Holland thought it her duty in these days of danger and anxiety to repair to the side of her whom Napoleon had wished to be looked upon as the head of the family. Hortense desired to be faithful to Maria Louisa, and resolved to go to Rambouillet, where the Empress was then staying.

This resolution filled the friends of the Queen with sorrow. As soon as Mademoiselle de Cochelet had received Hortense's letter which contained the information, she hastened to write in reply, and to beseech the Queen to desist from it. Monsieur de Marmold, Hortense's equerry, undertook to be the bearer of this letter, and immediately set out to meet the Queen at Louis, where she meant to stop for the night. This

gentleman intended to represent to his mistress the consternation of all her friends, and to unite his entreaties with those of Mademoiselle de Cochelet to dissuade Hortense from going to Rambouillet.

Mademoiselle de Cochelet wrote as follows :

"Monsieur de Marmold brings you this letter if he be in time to meet you at Louis. If you go to Rambouillet you will destroy all your prospects and those of your children. This is the painful conviction of all your friends.

"I was so glad ; for Prince Leopold had written to you in the name of Alexander to beg you to come to Malmaison. You could not but have accepted this invitation, since he was willing even to go and see you at Navarre. But instead of returning with the Empress Josephine, you go to join a family who have never sent for you. You will experience nothing but disappointment, and no one will thank you for the sacrifice you think you owe them. You certainly will repent that step, but not until it is too late. I beseech you, I ask it as a favour, do not go to Rambouillet.

"Those whom you are going to see will be indifferent to your devotion, whilst the allies will hear of your step with displeasure.

"The Empress is thoroughly Austrian; they take care she does not see anybody belonging to her husband's family. I tell you this in the name of Prince Leopold and of Madame de Caulaincourt. The latter, in spite of her old age, will go to you if you refuse much longer to join us. She has charged me to say that she beseeches you not to proceed to Rambouillet. As your lady of honour, and in virtue of her being the friend of your mother, she even commands you to desist from doing it.

"When I informed Prince Leopold of your intention to join Maria Louisa, tears started to his eyes. 'It is all very well to be proud,' he said, 'but she cannot draw back now. She is already under obligation to the Emperor of Russia, who is the author of the treaty of the 11th of April. I expect her answer, to give it to the Emperor. She owes him an answer.'

"I have spent an hour with Monsieur de Lavalette this morning. This excellent man knew nothing of the efforts we are making to induce you to

return. He said to me: 'How well it would be for her and her children, if Alexander should wish to see her.' O come! Do come! You must grant this as a favour to your friends. We should all despair if you were to go to Rambouillet.

"Prince Leopold intends writing you a few lines. He really could not take more interest in you or the Empress Josephine if he were a brother or a son. Count Tschernitscheff came to see me. To-morrow the Emperor of Austria will arrive. The new French princes and the king will soon be here as well! What a change!

"You really must see the Emperor of Russia; he wishes it so much. I implore you on my knees to show me that favour. This Alexander behaves so nobly that he commands every one's esteem. We forget he is our victor, and look upon him as a protector only. He seems to be the helper of those who have lost everything. His conduct is exemplary. He only receives visitors on business-matters. The fair ladies of the Faubourg St Germain cannot boast that he seeks them very much. This speaks highly for

him, for they say he is very fond of ladies. He told Prince Leopold that he intended going to Navarre. 'You know I love and esteem that family,' he added; 'Eugène is the very model of chivalry. I admire the bearing of Josephine, Queen Hortense, and Eugène. It is infinitely nobler than that of many others who ought to have exhibited greater devotion towards the Emperor.' Can you wonder at my liking the man who shows so much nobility of character? I hope you will soon be able to judge for yourself. For God's sake, return!

"LOUISA."

All these entreaties were in vain. Monsieur de Marmold met the Queen in Louis, he gave her the letter, and added all he could to induce her not to go to Rambouillet. Hortense's resolution remained unshaken.

"You are right," she answered. "Every word you say is true—yet I shall, nevertheless, go to the Empress. It is my duty. If difficulties should arise out of it I shall disregard them; I shall think of nothing but my duty.

Maria Louisa must be more unhappy than all of us. She stands most in need of consolation, at Rambouillet therefore I shall be most useful. Nothing can alter my resolution."

CHAPTER XXI.

QUEEN HORTENSE AND THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER.

Queen Hortense, in spite of the entreaties of her friends, went to Rambouillet. Maria Louisa received her with embarrassment, and told her she expected her father, the Emperor of Austria, and feared he would not like her presence. Besides, the young Empress, although sad and downcast, did not appear so much affected by the Emperor's downfall as had been expected by Hortense. Her husband's melancholy fate had

not wounded her heart as deeply as it had that of Josephine.

Hortense felt she was not wanted, she saw the presence of the Austrian Emperor would be quite sufficient to console the Empress of France. She thought of Josephine, who had been so deeply affected by Napoleon's misfortune, and as she found she was an embarrassment to Maria Louisa, instead of a consolation, she hastened to free her of her presence.

Now at last Hortense bent her proud neck, now at last she yielded to the wishes and petitions of her friends and her mother, who had returned to Malmaison, and went to Paris. They had told her so often that the interest of her sons demanded her presence at the capital, that she overcame her reluctance, and considered compliance with their wishes a duty.

So she went for several days to Paris, and stayed at her former hôtel, whose desolate solitude reminded her with awful eloquence of the greatness she had lost.

Those rooms which once had been the meeting-place of kings and princes stood empty, and bore on their soiled parquets the footmarks of the

hostile soldiery, who for some time had occupied the Queen's palace. By order of the Czar the Swedes had left it, but none of the servants had returned. Cowardly and ungratefully they had turned away from their sun, as it sank, and fled before the storm that shattered Hortense's crown.

When Alexander, informed of the arrival of the Queen, hastened to see her at her house, Hortense received him in the ante-room alone.

"Sire," she said, with a melancholy smile, "I have no one left to receive you with the customary ceremonies. My reception-rooms are deserted." The sight of this helpless woman, of this Queen without crown or subjects, without followers or pretensions, but who, nevertheless, stood before him in all the loveliness of womanly pride, and with a smile on her lips, made a deep impression on the Emperor. Tears rushed into his eyes.

The Queen saw it, and hastened to add,—

"But what does it matter? I do not think ante-chambers, filled with laced liveries, can make those who come to see me happier. And as to myself, I am proud to receive you. So you see I am a gainer by the change."

"Alas!" the Emperor said, "I am partly the

cause of this sudden change in your fortunes, and cannot console myself for it; but at any rate allow me to arrange your existence in the manner most pleasing to yourself. You love France, you have friends here, and must desire to remain; allow me to settle matters so that this may be effected."

"Do not speak about that," the Queen said, "we must follow destiny under all circumstances."

"Certainly," the Emperor continued, "I can no longer offer you a crown, but I wish you to hold an independent position in your own country, near your mother."

The Queen interrupted him, "I cannot at present remain with propriety in France, and must have the courage to regard at once the most painful side of my position."

"No!" the Emperor exclaimed, "you belong to your mother, and, besides, do you imagine that we, who are giving a crown to the Bourbons, will not insist on them respecting those with whom we have formed an alliance, and whom ourselves respect? With the Emperor Napoleon there was no longer a hope of peace; but while rendering him powerless to do us an injury, we do not the

less recognise that he is a great man, whom I loved as a friend, and who wounded me to the heart by breaking our treaties; but I do not the less desire to know him happy as well as his family. I was for a Regency, and especially for the country being consulted; but my colleagues eagerly recalled the Bourbons, without any guarantee. All the worse for the French if they are injured by it; they desired it, and not I. I will always cause your family to be respected. You see by the treaties that they can reside in France, or wherever they please. If Russia agreed with you, I should be only too happy to offer you a palace; but you would find our climate too severe for your delicate health, and in offering it I should not think sufficiently of you. You are so beloved in France! Why will you not remain in it? Everywhere I hear nothing but praises of you, even among those who appear enemies of your family: remain then where you are comfortable. You must arrange your existence here; it will not be worthy of you, but you will live tranquilly among your friends with your children. I know that is your sole desire, so let us settle the manner in which your position should be ar-

ranged. Mademoiselle, come here, and persuade the Queen to tell me what I can do for her."

The Emperor forced Mademoiselle de Cochelet to express her opinion, and she pleaded in his presence the interest of the Queen's children, for she knew that was her most sensitive side. She told the Queen she ought to think of them, that by keeping them in their own country she would leave them among their friends, while their name would probably be regarded everywhere as that of an enemy; she added, that the Queen, for their sake, could not refuse the Emperor's kindness, and that since through their mother they could have a destiny, a fortune, and a country, she would be culpable if she opposed it by refusing so obstinately.

The Queen gave a deep sigh; tears stood in her eyes, but then she overcame her emotion, and said to the Emperor:

"I am really touched, sire, by the interest you testify in me; you wish to force me to have obligations toward you; but am I not already too greatly indebted? Up to the present I had made up my mind to misfortune, I felt resigned: I never thought anything fortunate could happen

to me, so I know not what to ask; still I am resolved not to accept anything unbecoming either to myself or my children."

"Very well, then, trust to me," the Emperor said, and soon after left the room.

The same evening Hortense remained at home with her brother, and the Duke de Vicenza and Madame du Cayla joined them. The Emperor Alexander, who knew that the Queen would not return to Malmaison till the next morning, came to drink tea with her. He seemed considerably embarrassed on seeing Madame du Cayla, for he had fled from a brilliant party where every effort was made to keep him, and was not pleased at meeting a person who could tell how unceremoniously he had treated her society, as, instead of the business he had made an excuse of, he had come to repose with the brother and sister whom that society feared so greatly. Hence he said nothing to Madame du Cayla, but conversed with the Queen and the Duke de Vicenza.

On the other hand, Prince Eugène, with that moderate and frank tone that renders all disunion impossible, conversed with Madame du Cayla in a

manner that embarrassed her cruelly; in spite of all her wit she knew not how to answer him.

"I can conceive," the Prince said, "one dynasty being preferred to another; women especially do not enquire which system is more useful to their country, for they are guided by their affections; but, in the presence of an enemy, to forget themselves as well-bred ladies and French women, to go and meet a foreign army, fête it, and embrace it while still covered with French blood! Ah, Madame, tell me that you had lost your head, and then I could understand it."

"Why," Madame du Cayla said, "we did not go to meet enemies, they became our friends by restoring us the sovereigns we always loved."

"They were the enemies of France," Prince Eugène replied; "your sovereigns must not desire to separate themselves from the country they are once more called upon to govern: and you compromised them, while seeking a support in the conqueror, while the conquered are your brothers."

"Still," Madame du Cayla said with a smile, "we might not have succeeded in getting our kings back without that: the end justifies the means:

and be assured that had it not been for us, and the demonstrations which the people would not make, and which we made by becoming the people for the nonce, the sovereigns would not have declared themselves; we gained our cause at the expense of our persons."

"It is pleasant to me," the Prince retorted, "to have your assurance that the people counted for nothing in these acclamations, and that the Bourbons are solely indebted to you young and pretty ladies for their crown."

Malmaison, whither, after a short stay at Paris, Hortense returned, and where Josephine was also living, became a sort of sociable meeting-place of the sovereigns then assembled at Paris. Every one of these kings and princes was anxious to show his respect to the fallen Empress and her daughter, and thus testify the esteem they still felt for Napoleon.

One day the King of Prussia and his two sons, Frederic William and William, announced their intention to visit Malmaison. The Empress Josephine sent them an invitation for dinner, and asked Alexander and his two brothers to join them.

The Emperor accepted the invitation. When he and the young Grand-dukes entered the drawing-room, where the Duchess of St Leu was present at the time, he took the princes by the hand, and introducing them to Hortense, said:

"Madam, I give my two brothers into your charge; they appear in the world for the first time. My mother is afraid the fair French ladies will turn their heads. But perhaps I am fulfilling my promise to watch over them very badly in bringing them to Malmaison, where so many beautiful ladies are assembled."

"Fear nothing," the Queen replied with gravity, "I will be their Mentor, and promise you to watch over them with the eye of a mother."

The Emperor laughed, and pointing to Hortense's two sons, who just entered the room, said:

"Madam, it would be better for my brothers if they were no older than these boys."

He approached the children, and in shaking hands addressed them with "Monseigneur" and "Imperial Highness."

The boys looked up to him with astonishment, for the Russian Emperor was the first who addressed little Napoleon and his brother with these

proud titles. Their mother, the Queen, had never suffered their attendants to call them otherwise than by their Christian names. She wished to preserve them from vain pride in their exalted rank, and teach them to derive importance from themselves only.

Shortly afterwards the King of Prussia and his sons were announced, and the Emperor left the children to meet them.

Whilst Alexander and the King of Prussia saluted each other, Hortense's sons inquired of their governess who the gentlemen were that had just entered.

"It is the King of Prussia," whispered the lady, "and the gentleman who is now speaking to him is the Emperor of Russia."

Little Louis Napoleon looked for an instant attentively at the tall figures of the foreign potentates, whose proud names did not at all seem to awe him. He was accustomed to see kings in his mother's drawing-room.

"Mademoiselle," he said after a little pause, "are these two gentlemen our uncles as well? Must we call them so?"

"No, Louis, you must call them Sire."

"But why are they not our uncles?"

The governess withdrew with the children into a corner of the room, and told them that the King of Prussia and Alexander, far from being their uncles, were their conquerors.

"Then they are the enemies of our uncles?" Louis Napoleon asked angrily. "Why did this Emperor of Russia embrace me?"

"Because he is a generous enemy. Without his assistance you would possess nothing in the world, and the fate of your uncles would be still worse than it is already."

"Then we must be fond of that Emperor there?" asked the little boy.

"Certainly, for you owe him much."

The young prince made no reply, but he cast a penetrating look at the Emperor, who was just speaking with Josephine.

When, on the day after this conversation, Alexander again came to Malmaison and was sitting by the side of the Queen in the summer-house, little Louis Napoleon approached him noiselessly and behind his back, then put something glittering in the Emperor's hand, and hastily ran away.

The Queen called him back, and asked in a severe tone what he had done?

The little Prince returned hesitatingly, with his eyes bent to the ground, and then said with a blush:

"Oh, mamma, it was the ring uncle Eugène gave me. I wanted to make the Emperor a present of it, because he is so kind to you."

Alexander drew little Louis Napoleon to him, and, greatly moved, placed him on his lap.

He complied with the boy's wishes to accept the ring. He fastened it to his watch-chain, and vowed that he would carry this keepsake about with him as long as he lived.

CHAPTER XXII.

DEATH OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

Since Napoleon's star had gone down, since the Emperor had been obliged to leave France as an exile, Josephine's life seemed as if darkened by a cloud of deep melancholy. She felt that day had passed away and night had appeared, but she carefully concealed this feeling within her bosom; no tear, no sigh revealed to her affectionate daughter how much she suffered. She only lamented the Emperor's fate, and the misfortune of her children and grandsons. She seemed to have forgotten her own melancholy lot, she wished

nothing for herself. With the same easy grace that had distinguished her in former years, she performed the honours of her house at Malmaison, and in the society of the foreign princes showed a composure that was a stranger to her heart.

She would have preferred remaining alone with her sorrow in the interior of her palace, had she not thought that the welfare of her daughter and grandsons required her seeing society. The affectionate mother undertook to do that to which the proud Hortense was unable to stoop; she begged Alexander to have compassion on the Queen and her children.

Hence, so soon as the Czar had succeeded in obtaining the title-deeds which secured Hortense the Duchy of St Leu, he hastened to Malmaison to apprize the Empress of his success.

Josephine thanked him, not with words, but with tears, and grasping his hand, she begged him with charming simplicity to accept a keepsake from her.

The Emperor pointed to a cup on which Josephine's portrait was painted, and asked to be allowed to take it.

"No, sire," she said, "such a cup you may

buy anywhere. I wish to give you something which is not to be found anywhere else, and which sometimes will make you think of me. It is a present which I received from Pope Pius VII. on the day of my coronation. You have this day brought my daughter a ducal coronet, and I will show my gratitude by giving you this present, which will remind you at once of mother and daughter—of the fallen Empress and the fallen Queen."

The present which Josephine now handed over to the Emperor was an antique cameo of enormous size, which was of such beautiful and masterly workmanship that the Empress was fully justified in saying that nothing better of the kind could be found.

On this cameo were represented, side by side, the heads of Alexander the Great and his father, Philip of Macedonia. The perfection of the workmanship, as well as the size of the gem, made it extremely valuable. Alexander, therefore at first declined to accept this truly princely present, and only complied with the Empress's wishes when he saw that his refusal offended Josephine, who appeared that day unusually pale and

excitable. The Empress had reason to be sad. The Bourbons had pierced her heart with another arrow. Josephine had read in the newspapers an article which spoke in the most cruel and contemptuous terms of the Queen of Holland's eldest son being buried in Nôtre Dame, and added that the minister Blacas had given orders for the body being removed thence, and interred in one of the public churchyards.

Hortense, who had read this article, hastened to Paris to claim the remains of the child for whom she had wept so much, and to deposit them in the church of St Leu.

Josephine trembled as she told the Emperor of this new insult, and a deadly paleness covered her cheek.

For the first time the strength failed her to conceal her sufferings. Hortense was absent, and she might allow herself the consolation of banishing the artificial smile and colour from her lip, and showing her face as it was, already marked by the hand of approaching death.

"Your Majesty is ill!" exclaimed the Emperor.

Josephine, with a smile that brought tears

into Alexander's eyes, pointed to her heart and whispered:—

"It is here, sire, I have received the fatal stab."

She was but too right. Her heart had indeed been fatally wounded.

The Emperor, startled by the appearance of Josephine, immediately hastened to Paris, and sent his own physician to Malmaison to receive information about the state of Josephine's health. When the physician returned he told the Emperor that Josephine was dangerously ill, and to all appearance past recovery.

He was right. Alexander never saw the Empress again.

Hortense and Eugène spent a melancholy night at the bedside of their mother. They employed the most skilful physicians, but they all confirmed the Russian's opinion that the state of the patient was hopeless. Josephine died broken-hearted. With a strong hand she had held that heart together as long as her life was useful to her children, but now that Hortense's fate had been sealed she took her hands off and—bled to death.

The Empress Josephine died on the 29th of March, 1814, after an illness which apparently only lasted two days. Hortense did not hear her last sigh. When she entered the sick-room after the Abbé Bertrand had administered the last sacrament to the dying Empress, when Josephine stretched out her arms and tried in vain to speak to her children, grief overpowered her daughter, who sank senseless to the ground. Josephine died in the arms of her son.

The news of the Empress's death made a deep impression on the Parisians. It seemed as if the capital had forgotten that Napoleon was no longer the sovereign of France, and that the Bourbons had returned to the throne of their fathers. Every one was sad, every one bewailed Josephine; the hearts of the French nation preserved the memory of the woman, who had been a benefactress to many, and of whom each one was enabled to remember some act of benevolence or generosity.

Josephine, when dead, was once more to receive homage from thousands. Thousands went to Malmaison to see "the Empress" for the last time. Even the Faubourg St Germain participated in

the general regret. The proud, overbearing Royalists, who had returned with the Bourbons, remembered, perhaps, the kindnesses they had received from the Empress, while she was still on the throne, and expended one half of her income in relieving exiles. On returning to France along with King Louis they had forgotten to thank their benefactress; but now that she was dead, they could not help esteeming and admiring her.

"What an interesting woman that incomparable Josephine was!" said Madame du Cayla, the particular friend of the King, "what fine tact, what kindness and moderation, she possessed. Her very dying, just now, is a proof of her good taste."

Eugène took Hortense from her mother's death-bed almost by force, and immediately after Josephine had breathed her last. She went with her brother and children to St Leu. The Empress's two grandsons were the only members of her family who followed the coffin when she was buried at Malmaison. Grief had thrown her two children on the sick-bed. Behind the little princes, Napoleon and Louis Napoleon, came the

Russian General de Sacken, who represented his Emperor, and the carriages of all the kings and potentates by whom Napoleon had been dethroned.

The last night Alexander of Russia passed on French soil, before starting for England, he spent at St Leu. In taking leave of Eugène and Hortense, who on that occasion left her room for the first time, he assured them both of his sincere and unchangeable friendship. Knowing that the ambassador he left at Paris, Pozzo di Borgo,* was an inveterate enemy of Napoleon and his family, he gave him Baron Boutiakin as an *attaché*, who was selected by Mademoiselle de Cochelet herself, and was to receive and forward the Queen's letters as well as those of her faithful companion.

A few days after, Eugène also left St Leu and his sister, to return with the King of Bavaria to his new home, Germany.

Hortense followed him with a melancholy eye

* Pozzo di Borgo said on hearing the news of Napoleon's death at St Helena, "I did not kill him, but I threw the last handful of earth on his coffin, so that he could not rise again."

as he departed. Now for the first time she felt how utterly lonely and forlorn she was.

She had shed no tears at seeing herself fall from the exalted station she once occupied, she had not complained when the hurricane of misfortune hurled the crowns of her relatives from their heads; on the contrary, she had smiled in the very midst of that storm, and offered her brow to the tempest, that it might sweep off her royal diadem; but now that she stood in the lonely halls of the castle of St Leu, alone and isolated, with no one by her side but her two little sons and a few faithful ladies, then Hortense wept.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, stretching out her hands to Mademoiselle de Cochelet, "my courage is gone! My mother is dead, my brother has left me, Alexander will soon forget the promised protection, and then I shall have to struggle alone with my two children against the hostilities people will heap on me for the sake of the name I bear. I am afraid I shall have cause to repent not having carried out my former plan. Will the attachment I feel for my country make up for the sorrows I can foresee?"

The gloomy presentiments of the Queen were

to be verified but too soon. In the hour of great misfortune the mortal eye is gifted with the power of beholding coming events; but, like Cassandra, we behold them without being able to avert them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RETURN OF THE BOURBONS.

On the 12th of April the Count of Artois, who was the precursor of the King, and whom Louis XVIII. had nominated his lieutenant, made his entry into Paris. At the gate of the capital he was received by a newly-formed "provisional government," on the head of which stood Monsieur de Talleyrand. Artois's reply to this minister's speech was a short one.

"Nothing is changed in France," he said, "there is now one Frenchman more in this country."

The people received the king's lieutenant with cold curiosity. Troops of the allies lined his road to the Tuileries, where the ladies of the Faubourg St Germain, ornamented with white lilies and cockades, had prepared an enthusiastic welcome.

The Countess du Cayla, who afterwards became the noted favourite of the king, and who had been one of the principal instruments of his restoration, was the first to unfurl again the white standard of the Bourbons. Accompanied by a few of her friends, she appeared, a few days before the arrival of the Prince, in the streets of Paris, and endeavoured to excite amongst the people some enthusiasm for the family of their legitimate master.

But the nation, as well as the army, still continued to preserve their old devotion to the Emperor, and it was with sullen indifference that they listened to the proclamations of Prince Schwarzenberg, read by Monsieur de Nauvineux. The Royalists, of course, shouted their "*Vive le Roi!*" but the mass of the people remained silent.

This gloomy silence terrified the Countess du Cayla; she felt it to be a token of secret discon-

tent with the new order of things. She saw the necessity of animating and exciting the sullen crowd that they might show their sentiments and express themselves energetically. In vain had it been tried to make the people enthusiastic by words: it remained to be seen whether a visible symbol would produce a greater effect. It was resolved to show them the standard of the Bourbons.

Madame du Cayla presented her pocket-handkerchief to her companion, and begged him to wave it high in the air, and to display it the more effectually she tied it to Count Montmorency's stick. Thus a walking-stick, with a pocket-handkerchief fastened to it, was the first Royalist standard, which, after a period of twenty-six years, was again unfurled in the streets of Paris.

The Parisians beheld the ensign with something like apprehensive veneration; they did not hail it with acclamations or other tokens of joy; they continued to remain silent, but still they followed the procession of the Royalists, who tumultuously proceeded to the Boulevards, shouting their enthusiastic "*Vive le Roi!*" They took

no part in the demonstration, it is true, but neither did they do anything to prevent it taking place.

Meanwhile, the joy of the Royalists, and of the Royalist ladies in particular, attained such a height as almost to overstep the limits of decency. In the delirium of their fanatical loyalty they received the hostile troops of the allies in a manner that almost resembled a universal declaration of love on the part of the fair ones of St Germain. Labouring under a strange confusion of ideas, these soldiers, although undeniably enemies of France, appeared to them part and parcel of their beloved Bourbons, and they received them with an enthusiasm almost equal to that with which they greeted the returning family of their king. There was a period during which the hearts of these ladies belonged to every nation, their own countrymen excepted.

Louis XVIII. himself felt dissatisfied with the boundless enthusiasm of the Faubourg St Germain, and openly told the Countess du Cayla how ridiculous and undignified appeared to him the demeanour of the Royalist ladies on that occasion. He even expressed his belief that it

might have been very injurious to his cause, considering that the nation had at the time not yet expressed their will.

"It would have been better," he said, "to observe an imposing reserve towards the allies, without any demonstration or show of affection. A dignified, composed bearing would have inspired them with respect towards the nation, and they would not have left Paris impressed with the belief, which they entertained fifty years ago, that the French were the most frivolous and immoral of all nations. You, in particular, my ladies, have laid yourselves open to reproach in that respect. The allies, as a body, have appeared to you *en masse* so amiable that you have incurred the suspicion of having loved them *en détail*, and consequently there are rumours afloat which do not greatly honour the French ladies."

"Mais, mon Dieu!" the Countess du Cayla replied to her royal friend, "the ladies wished to show the allies their gratitude for being put in possession of your Majesty again. They have offered to the allies as a free gift what could not be obtained either by the tyrants of the Republic or by the heroes of the Empire; not one of us,

I am sure, will regret what she has done for our good friends, the allies."

"What had been done for the good friends, the allies," nevertheless gave rise to much unpleasant misunderstanding; and those husbands that did not share the enthusiasm of their wives for the foreign warriors soon thought they had cause for complaint.

The Count de G * * *, among others, had married, a few days previously to the Restoration, a noble and handsome young lady. She herself, in her youthful carelessness, was utterly indifferent to the political crisis. Not so, however, her mother-in-law, father-in-law, and husband, who were royalists of the purest water.

On the day when the allies entered Paris these three hastened like all other legitimists to welcome the "good friends," and each one returned with a stranger. The husband brought an Englishman, the mother-in-law a Prussian, and the father-in-law an Austrian.

All three zealously endeavoured to outshine each other in fêtes and festivities, given in honour to their friends, whose presence was considered a great cause of rejoicing. La petite Comtesse

alone remained indifferent amidst the enthusiasm of her family, and thus incurred the reproach of taking too little interest in the good cause. She was exhorted to do "all she could," effectually to entertain the gallant soldiers who had restored to France her legitimate king.

Hence it came about that the husband begged the Englishman to give the Comtesse a lesson in reading; the marchioness had a particular wish that the Prussian should take her daughter-in-law to the balls, in order to teach her the German mode of waltzing, while the Marquis, who had discovered that the Austrian was a great fancier of paintings, asked her to visit the picture-galleries with him.

In a word, they placed the young marchioness in a position where it was easy to commit not only one, but three *faux pas;* for why should she display a preference for any one of her visitors?

But she was young, and but little experienced in similar combinations, and thus it came to pass that her triple intrigue was speedily discovered by her family. Husband, mother-in-law, and father-in-law were beside themselves with anger. That

was too much, even for the royalistic zeal of the Legitimists, and they tumultuously reproached the youthful offender.

"I'm sure it is not my fault," the lady, amidst tears, exclaimed. "You wished it yourself. Didn't you tell me to do all I could to oblige the gentlemen; how then could I dare refuse them anything?"

But there were also cases in which the enthusiastic ladies of the Faubourg St Germain found themselves rejected by those to whom they offered themselves. Even the noble and proud Marchioness de M * * had to experience this. This lady placed herself in front of one of the gloomy and dissatisfied-looking regiments of the Imperial Guard, that had just allowed the Count of Artois to ride past their files in silence. The Marchioness loudly called upon them to show their affection for the royal family, adding that she would belong to him who first shouted "*Vive le Roi!*" The faithful soldiers of the Emperor, however, remained unmoved by this promise, there was not one willing to gain the offered prize; all were silent as before.

The princes who stood at the head of the

allied armies were naturally the chief object of the ovations of the Royalists, although by them they were least appreciated. The Austrian Emperor was too much occupied with the future of his daughter and grandson, the King of Prussia too stern and serious to pay any attention to the coquetries of the Bourbonist ladies; all their affections and efforts were therefore directed towards Alexander, the youthful Emperor of Russia.

But here also their enthusiasm was but ill-requited. Alexander lived in a seclusion that almost seemed to imply want of confidence, and yet the noble ladies of the Faubourg St Germain decided the fate of France, by inducing him to give his vote to the family of the Bourbons. For a long time it remained undecided who was to occupy the vacant throne, for the person was not yet fixed upon to whom the allies should confide the reins of France.

It was the secret wish of the Emperor of Russia to raise the noble-minded and universally beloved viceroy of Italy, Eugène Beauharnois, to the throne. The letter in which Eugène had answered the offer of the allies who tempted him

with the duchy of Genoa, had procured Josephine's son the Czar's lasting esteem. Alexander himself had written to Eugène in the name of the allies and promised him the duchy of Genoa if he would leave Napoleon's cause and join his enemies.

Eugène Beauharnois answered as follows:

"SIRE,

"I have read the proposals of your Majesty; they are doubtless very kind, but they cannot shake my resolution. I am afraid I managed to express my thoughts badly when I had the honour of seeing you, if your Majesty can believe for one moment that I am capable of selling my honour for any prize, however high it may be. Neither a duchy of Genoa, nor a kingdom of Italy, can tempt me to treason. The example of the King of Naples does not seduce me; I would sooner be an honest soldier than a treacherous prince.

"The Emperor, you say, has wronged me. If so, I have forgotten it. I only remember his kindnesses. Everything I possess or am, I owe to him; my rank, my titles, my fortune, and, above

all, what you kindly call my glory. Therefore, I am determined to serve him as long as I live. My heart and my arm are equally his. May my sword shiver in my hand if ever I draw it against the Emperor or my native country. I flatter myself that my well-founded refusal will at least secure me your esteem.

"I am, &c. &c."

The Emperor of Austria, on the other hand, wished his grandson, the King of Rome, to ascend the throne of France, and his mother to be at the head of the Regency during his minority. But he shrunk from asking his allies openly to adopt his plan, as he had promised them to sanction everything they should think proper to do. In vain, therefore, did the Duke de Cadore, who had been sent by Maria Louisa from Blois to the allies to guard the Empress's interest, try to persuade her father to secure her son the throne of France.

Francis told his daughter's messenger that he thought he was justified in hoping much, but that he was incapable of gaining his point by force.

"I love my daughter," the Emperor said, "I

love my son-in-law, and am ready to shed my blood for them."

"But, sire," the Duke de Cadore replied, "there is no necessity for such a sacrifice."

"I am ready to shed my blood for them," the Emperor continued, "to sacrifice my life; but I repeat, I have promised my allies to sanction everything they shall do, but to do nothing without their advice. My minister, Monsieur de Metternich, is even now at your house, and I shall ratify anything he has signed."

Secretly, however, the Emperor continued hoping that what Metternich was preparing for his signature, would prove the King of Rome's nomination to the throne of France.

The zeal of the Royalists was destined to blight this hope.

The Emperor of Russia had taken up his quarters in the hôtel of Monsieur de Talleyrand. He had yielded to the demonstrations and entreaties of the French diplomatist, who knew very well how much easier it would be to secure the services of this "Agamemnon of the holy alliance," if he could hold him at each hour and minute, as it were, in his hand. In hospitably

receiving the Emperor of Russia, Talleyrand hoped to lead him captive, body and soul, and be able to make the most of him.

Under these circumstances it was to Talleyrand that the Countess du Cayla hastened, in order to make with the Bonapartist of yesterday, but the Royalist of to-day, the necessary preparations for the return of the Bourbons.

Talleyrand took upon himself to procure the Countess an audience of the Emperor; he was successful. In leading the fair lady to the Czar's room, he whispered in her ear,—

"You had better imitate Madame de Semallé. Try to administer a heavy blow at once. The Emperor is gallant, as you know, and he may grant to the entreaties of a lady what he refuses to diplomacy."

The hint was not thrown away. Hardly had the Countess du Cayla been left alone, after entering the Emperor's room, ere she extended her arms beseechingly, and prostrated herself before him.

The Emperor hastened immediately to raise her in the politest manner.

"What are you doing?" he asked, almost

frightened, "a noble lady should never bow the knee before a gentleman."

"Sire," the Countess replied, "I kneel before you because I am about to ask a favour of you, which no one else is capable of granting. It will be doubly a matter of rejoicing to see Louis XVIII. return, and to see him led back by Alexander I."

"It is true then that the French nation still revere the House of Bourbon?"

"Yes, sire! They are our only hope, to them alone our hearts belong."

"Oh, that is excellent," Alexander exclaimed; "and are all French ladies equally enthusiastic?"

"Every French heart is beating for the Royal family!"

"Nay, if this be the case, if France herself recall the King, the legislative bodies may pronounce themselves, and all will be finished."

Now the Countess du Cayla was the very woman to bring about such a manifestation of opinion on the part of the "legislative bodies." She hastened to promulgate throughout Paris the Emperor's words, and on the evening following her interview with the Emperor she gave a grand

soirée to which the most distinguished ladies of her party and a great number of senators were invited.

"I wished," says the Countess in her Memoirs, "thus to tempt these gentlemen into a solemn promise. Silly woman that I was! Had not most of them taken and broken at least a dozen oaths?"

On the day following this soirée the senate, in an extraordinary sitting, proclaimed a provisional government, composed of Talleyrand, the Duke de Dalberg, the Marquis de Jancourt, Count Bournonville, and the Abbé Montesquieu. The senate, under the influence of these men, then proceeded to declare the Emperor Napoleon deprived of the throne, and proclaimed Louis XVIII. the new ruler of France. But whilst the senate were thus manifesting in solemn sitting their legitimistic sentiments, they at the same time showed clearly their utter want of principle and patriotic feeling. The senators, in an especial clause of the treaty with the returning king, stipulated that the customary salary should continue to be paid to themselves as a pension for life. Thus the honourable senators in recalling Louis XVIII. took good care to be rewarded for it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BOURBONS AND THE NAPOLEONS.

The allies, without any further investigation, took the resolution of the senate for the voice of the people, and recalled Louis XVIII., who under the name of Count de Lille had suffered a protracted exile at Hartwell, to the throne of his fathers.

The Emperor of Austria kept his word. He did not object to the measures taken by the allies, but suffered his grandson, the King of Rome, to be deprived of his heritage, and consented to the imperial diadem being taken from his daughter's brow. The Emperor Francis, however, was quite

as much surprised at the unexpected turn matters were taking, as Maria Louisa herself, for up to the occupation of Paris the allies had held out to him hopes of his daughter and grandson continuing in power.

The Emperor's disappointment gave occasion for a witty caricature, which on the day of Louis's entering Paris, was seen posted on the very walls on which was advertised Chateaubriand's enthusiastic pamphlet on the return of the Bourbons. In this caricature, of which thousands of copies circulated in the capital, the Emperor of Austria was seen in a handsome open carriage; Alexander, as coachman, was seated on the box; the Regent of England acted the part of a post-boy, and the King of Prussia, arrayed as a lacquey, stood behind. Napoleon, on foot, ran by the side of the carriage, calling out to the Emperor of Austria, "Look here, papa-in-law, they have kicked me out!" "And taken me in," was Francis's reply. Great was the rejoicing of the ladies of the Faubourg St Germain, when at last they were to see again their king, and they were but too willing to evince their gratitude to the Emperor of Russia. Alex-

ander, however, appeared in this instance insensible to all their homage; he even avoided being present at the parties given by the new king in the Tuileries. *La haute volée* and all the assembled diplomacy were shocked to see the Emperor manifest, quite openly, his sympathies for Napoleon's family, and go to Malmaison instead of attending the *fêtes* in the Tuileries.

Count Nesselrode at last besought his friend, Mademoiselle de Cochelet, to make the Emperor acquainted with the general dissatisfaction of the Faubourg St Germain, when Alexander should again call on the companion of the Queen to talk with her, as he would often do, about the prospects of Hortense.

"Sire," said Mademoiselle de Cochelet, "in the Faubourg St Germain they are jealous of the zeal your Majesty shows on behalf of the Queen. Count Nesselrode takes it much to heart. 'Our Emperor,' he says, 'goes far too often to Malmaison. All the diplomatists feel astonished about it, and society begins to murmur. They fear lest he may succumb to influences which it is not his policy to follow.'"

"In that I recognise my faithful Nesselrode,"

the Emperor replied with a smile, "he easily feels disquietude. What do I care for the Faubourg St Germain? So much the worse for these fair ladies if they do not count me amongst their conquests! I prefer the noble qualities of the heart to all outward appearance, and I find everything worthy of affection and admiration in the company of Josephine, the Queen of Holland, and the Prince Eugène. I prefer being with them, in the familiarity of intimate friendship, to the society of people who behave like lunaties, and who, instead of enjoying the triumph we have prepared for them, only think of ruining their enemies, and in doing so begin with those who formerly so generously protected them. I have no patience with their extravagance!"

"The French ladies are coquettish," the Emperor said in another part of the conversation; "when I came here I was greatly afraid of them, for I know to what degree they can be amiable, but it strikes me their hearts are no longer theirs. This is the reason I respond to their advances as I do. I am on the look-out not to be deceived, but I am afraid these ladies covet admiration so much as to feel hurt at finding their lavishly-be-

stowed attentions repaid by customary politeness merely."

Mademoiselle de Cochelet undertook the defence of the French ladies against the Emperor. She told him he ought not to judge them by the manner in which they behaved with respect to him, since it was but natural that they should feel enthusiastic for a young Emperor, who presented himself in so favourable a light! They might wish to be noticed by him without being coquettish.

"But have your ladies really waited for my coming," replied the Emperor, with the sad smile peculiar to him, "to feel their hearts beat? I seek genius and wit, but I shun all those who would fain exercise over me an influence derived from my affection. I consider this nothing but egotism, and am unwilling to serve it."

Whilst the Royalists and the ladies of the Faubourg St Germain were entertaining the allies with lavish hospitality, and flattering the newly-returned king with tales of popular rejoicing, the nation was already beginning to feel dissatisfied. The allies had done their work, they had given back to France her legitimate

king, and crowned their enterprise by stipulating in the treaty of peace that France should be reduced to her old boundaries of the ante-revolutionary time.

France was obliged to submit to the will of her conquerors, who took from the weakness of Royalty what they had been obliged to grant to the strength of imperialism.

All fortified frontier-places which had been gained by a heavy sacrifice of blood, and were now occupied by French garrisons, were to be given back,—mighty and powerful France was to shrivel into the France of thirty years ago!

It was this that made the nation feel dissatisfied. Those very Frenchmen who had left Napoleon's cause, because they were tired of his continual wars, were yet proud of his conquests, and most unwilling to consent to a cession that wounded their national vanity. They felt angry with the king for having submitted to such a humiliation, and said that he had prized his crown higher than the honour of France.

Louis XVIII. himself keenly felt the humiliation connected with the restitution of the old

French boundaries. He had tried, and tried hard, to make the allies desist from their demands, but they had given his diplomatists to understand that if Louis did not fancy the newly-shaped France, he was at liberty to cede it to Maria Louisa.

Thus the king was forced to acquiesce in the arrangement which had been made, but he did so with great bitterness of heart, and whenever his courtiers exalted the merits of the allies, he might be heard to whisper, "Mes chers amis, les ennemis!"

With such feelings towards the allies, it was with reluctance only, and not until after a long and obstinate struggle, that Louis granted what they asked for the family of Napoleon. But the Emperor Alexander kept his word; he stood up for the rights of Queen Hortense and her children, and defended her against the hatred of the Bourbons, the ill-will of the Royalists, and the indifference of the allies. To him alone, and to his fortitude, did the family of the ex-Emperor owe the clause in the treaty of the 11th of April, in which Louis XVIII. solemnly pledged himself

"that the titles and dignities of all the members of the Imperial family should be recognized and considered legitimate."

Alexander by great efforts at last succeeded in obtaining from Louis XVIII. a title and some property for Hortense. It was owing to the Czar's reiterated demands, and to them alone, that King Louis nominated Hortense Duchess of St Leu, giving her at the same time her estates as an independent duchy.

But these concessions were made reluctantly, and through the pressure of the obligations Louis XVIII. was under towards princes who had given him back his throne. These obligations the Bourbons would have forgotten as gladly as they did the Revolution or the Empire.

The Bourbons seemed to awake from a long slumber, and felt astonished at the world having moved onward during the time of their absence.

According to their opinion everything ought to have remained as it was twenty years ago, and they refused to recognise the legitimacy of events that had taken place during this period. Consequently King Louis signed the first document laid before him as given "in the nineteenth year of his

reign," and tried in every respect to revert to the year 1789. It was probably owing to this extraordinary manner of viewing things that the title deeds, in which Louis XVIII. nominated Hortense Duchess of St Leu, were couched in terms necessarily offensive to the Queen. They ran: "The king raises Mademoiselle Hortense de Beauharnois to the rank of Duchess de St Leu."

The Queen was very indignant on receiving this communication, and at once protested.

"Is it possible," she said to Mademoiselle de Cochelet as she rose with great animation, "that M. de Nesselrode supposed I would consent to accept such a title? Louis XVIII., now he is recognised as King of France, has the power to sanction by any document he pleases the possession of my estates of St Leu: but I cannot consent to his adding to it in this manner a title which I have the right to take, and which, if accepted in this way, would give me the appearance of denying the validity of the one that belonged to me. I received the title of Queen without at all desiring it; it did not render me happy, and I lose it without regret. What do I care, after all, for the title given me! but when I am called upon to stoop to a

victorious party, I must not make any concession."

Then, walking about the room in increased excitement, she added:

"The King has just signed the first act of the nineteenth year of his reign, and it is a manifestation of his wish not to recognise the past. He is certainly the master, if the nation consent to it: but we owe it to the nation that raised us so high never to disavow what they did for us; hence I consider it my duty never to let it be forgotten that I have been a Queen, though I do not insist upon being called so; but I will only accept this compensation offered for all my children have lost, from persons who will recognise what they were as well as what I was.

"Do not believe," the Queen continued, as she drew nearer to Mademoiselle de Cochelet, "that this change of title does not possess importance. Has it not been stated in the papers that my brother, on arriving here, had himself announced to the king as the Marquis de Beauharnois? He thought it beneath his dignity to contradict these falsehoods, and he was wrong; but those who invented them were well aware that

they are false: they wish to persuade the French that the persons thus placed at their head have recognised the slight validity of their claims, and have come to lay their titles unceremoniously at the feet of the Bourbons. Such are the consequences of a system which wishes to annihilate all the glories of the past, and in which I cannot take part without insulting France and the Emperor. Peoples are as proud as kings; they will not allow those they have exalted to be abased, and they adhere to what is of their own creation, until they think proper to destroy it again. If feelings change, if the Bourbons become again kings of France, if the nation consider it right and dismiss us, we have nothing to say; but our dignity is too closely connected with the dignity of France for us to consent to compromise ourselves in such a fashion."

At the moment the Queen finished this sentence Prince Eugène entered the room; his sister gave him the document to read, and he was as much scandalized as she was. Both begged Mademoiselle de Cochelet to tell Monsieur de Nesselrode what they thought, and that the Queen would accept nothing.

The indefatigable lady returned to Paris and saw Nesselrode, who was her intimate friend. He listened to her, and then replied with an air of annoyance:

"What would you have me do? nothing is to be obtained from Monsieur de Blacas; they all seem to have returned from another world, and I really believe they are surprised to find the children grown up whom they left in the cradle. I was unable to obtain anything better from the King's minister. Louis XVIII. is certainly disposed to treat kindly Prince Eugène, the Queen, and the Empress; but he would like only to be obliged to treat them as he would have done in 1789, for the Court do not like to hear a word about the new system, and the titles of Empress and Queen would always stick in their throats."

"But you are well aware," Mademoiselle de Cochelet returned to the charge, "that these princesses intend to assume a more modest title, as the Empress intends to take that of Duchess de Navarre, and the Queen that of Duchess de St Leu."

"Yes!" Monsieur de Nesselrode continued, "if the only point is their assumption of the titles

that suit them, no one would have a word to say; but our object is to establish a Duchy for the Queen, granting her an independent fortune, which she can leave to her children,—and for that a decree of the new sovereign is required."

It was at length decided that the Duke of Vicenza should be called into council, and Nesselrode left the lady, declaring that the unlucky Duchy cost him more trouble than did the treaty of Paris.

At the consultation that took place a few days later, it was decided that it would be more advantageous both for the Queen and the entire Imperial family, to establish the Duchy of St Leu as the result of the treaty of April 11. Hence, then, by inserting "Hortense Eugènie, designated in the treaty of April 11," Louis would be forced to recognise her as a Queen, as it was stated in that treaty that all the members of the family should retain their titles; while at the same time this name of Queen, which appeared to them so hard of digestion, did not offend their eyes.

The letters patent were, therefore, drawn up in this form, and although it was but a negative and indirect recognition of the former royal title,

it was at any rate no longer an humiliation to accept it.

The Viceroy of Italy, the high-minded and universally beloved Eugène, who upon the Czar's express wish had come to Paris to watch over his interests, caused the Bourbons equally great embarrassment.

It was impossible for the King not to do some justice to the merits of one of the most distinguished heroes of the empire, who at the same time was the son-in-law of the King of Bavaria. When Eugéne expressed a wish to be presented to Louis, an audience was at once granted to him.

But how was he to be received? What title was to be given to Napoleon's step-son, the Viceroy of Italy? It would have been too ridiculous to repeat the absurdity of Hortense's title-deed, and to call Eugène "Vicomte de Beauharnois;" but to accord him the title of royalty would have compromised the legitimate dignity of the dynasty. In this dilemma King Louis invented what he thought a good expedient. When the Duc d'Aumont introduced the prince, the King

approached him with a gracious smile, and said, "I rejoice, Monsieur, my Marshal of France, to make your acquaintance."

Eugène, who had just been about to salute the King, stopped short, and turned round to see whom the sovereign might be addressing. Louis smiled and continued,

"You, sir, are this Marshal of France, for I raise you to that rank."

"Sire," Eugène replied, bowing low before the King, "I feel obliged for your kind intentions; but the misfortune of holding a high rank, to which fate has raised me, prevents my accepting the proud title with which you have just honoured me. I feel very grateful to you, sire, but I must decline."

Thus the King's ruse proved a failure, and Eugène went forth a conqueror from this first interview with Louis. He did not stand in need of assistance from the King of France, for his father-in-law, the King of Bavaria, had raised him to the rank of a prince of his family, and given him the duchy of Leuchtenberg. Thither Eugène retired, and lived to enjoy many a peace-

ful year by the side of a loving wife and surrounded by his children, till at last death overtook him in 1824, and tore him from a family that deeply lamented his loss.

END OF VOL. I.

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